新妹の魔王
The Testament of Sister New Devil
契約者
テスタメント
V
上栖綴人
イラスト つ 大熊猫介
［ニトロプラス］
角川スニーカー文庫

新妹魔王の契約者
テスタメント
V
The TestAment of SisteR New DeviL

東城 刃更
澪と万理亜の〝兄〟。特異能力《無次元の執行》の使い手
成瀬 万理亜
刃更と澪を主従契約させた下の〝妹〟。ロリエロサキュバス
野中 柚希
幼馴染の刃更が好きな、勇者一族の少女
野中 胡桃
柚希の妹で、最近は刃更の家で生活している
東城 迅
刃更の父で、元・最強の勇者
滝川 八尋（ラース）
刃更達のクラスメイトだが、正体は澪を監視する魔族
ルキア
万理亜の姉で、ラムサスに仕える魔族
ラムサス
先代魔王亡き後に穏健派を束ねる魔族。澪の伯父にあたる
レオハルト
穏健派と対立関係にある現魔王
成瀬 澪
先代魔王の娘で、刃更の〝妹〟になった少女

「ゼストは刃更様のメイドです……その事を、たっぷりと教えて下さい」
「熱いの止まらな……ふぁあんっ」

「そこを……退けえ！」
「くそっ――やるしかないのか！」
「――安らかに逝け、戦神の子よ」

Prologue - Departing in the Night of Christmas

I prohibit you from using 「War」 to bring your message across.

Do not use nice words to justify every single person's suffering.

Part 1

In this world, there is a place known as the 「Demon Realm」.

From the God Tribe, that is the place where exiles were dimensionally banished to.

They vowed revenge against those who banished them from the paradise, the God Tribe, and had turned themselves into a race relatively similar to the sacred God Tribe.

In other words, The Demon Race.

Thereafter -- when the clash of the two races in the 「First Great Demon-God War」 ended, both sides went into long-term hibernation and recuperation.

After waking from the hibernation, the God Tribe created life forms known as 「Humans」 and bestowed power and blessings to suitable Humans -- and thus groups of Humans able to fight against the Demon race was born.

The groups of Humans then fought a war against the Demon race who once again attempted to invade the God Realm. Those Humans possessed power enough to maintain the peace within the Human

Realm, and as time passed by, they became known as -- The Hero Tribe. However--

…No one knows if this story is really true.

Wrapped up within a towel having just washed herself, Mio returned to her room and closed the door, and thought.

What she was doubting wasn't the origins of the Hero Tribe, but the origins of the God and Demon Realms belonging to the Gods and Demons respectively.

Even though Mio was just about to return to the Demon Realm, she was very different from Maria who had grown up within the Demon Realm, and the ones from the Hero Tribe like Basara. Mio had spent majority of her life in the Human Realm living as a normal Human.

Even though Mio had personally experienced the existence and power of the psionic [1], she was just an unqualified rookie. Thus, there were still many things that she was still unable to believe.

…However,

Who knows? -- The traditions and cultures of words from God and religious traditions might not all be lies. Even if topics like the Origin of the Universe and the Earth, or Human Evolution managed to get scientific proof, no one could really prove if there is really such a thing.

Naruse Mio knew very well that there are still some things that even science still cannot prove.

Demon race, Heroes, Magic, etc. are all confirmed to exist.

--And in the night of 25th December, today, they will make a long-distance trip.

With Maria's sister Lucia as the guide, they will advance towards another land -- the Demon Realm.

Part of the Moderates Faction just like Maria, Lucia had come to the Toujou Residence to deliver the invitation from the Demon Realm on the night of the sports festival…about a month ago.

It has been said that with the battle against the Current Demon Lord Faction looming over them, individuals saying to extract Wilbert's power inherited by Mio, as well as to increase protection around her have already began appearing. Also, there were opinions to crown Mio as the New Demon Lord as well as the opposition to it, and nothing conclusive have been reached. Thus, they needed to hear about Mio's current opinions.

The reason they all had been fighting to this day was to preserve their normal daily life. If this trip to the Demon Realm is the only way to do it, they will not hesitate at all, since the enemy's leader is the Current Demon Lord after all.

But having said that, Mio and the rest also have their own lives to live -- they need to go to school. Thus, Basara strongly expressed opposition to taking a long absence from school, skipping their tests and neglecting their school life, and postponed the date to the end of the second semester.

"….Oh, shit."

Mio sat on the chair before the dressing table, and began to blow-dry her hair.

The current time is a little past eleven in the night. In another hour, Maria's sister Lucia will be coming over to fetch them; Maria, Yuki, as well as Kurumi were all probably making their last preparations -- except for only Basara.

After the closing ceremony of the sports festival, Basara had went a different way to another place, different from them who had went straight home. I think he had went with the student council to celebrate. [2]

--As for the celebration for the Organising Committee, it had already happened long ago.

As the headcount for this year's organising committee was nearly doubled from last year, adding in that the third years who aren't supposed to show up, the preparations definitely entailed many problems; a tornado also suddenly happened temporarily on that day, damaging some of the equipment. Fortunately, they managed to overcome the many different difficult hurdles, and after successfully bringing the Sports Festival to an end, the organising committee once again gathered in the AV room [3] and submitted the reports from the various departments, and the committee was then dissolved. They all then had a small celebration with the delicacies and drinks prepared by the school; Mio, Yuki, and Basara had taken part, and Aikawa Shiho and Sakaki Chika was part of it too.

…However.

The student council members who handles almost every matter in the school were different from the organising committee members who could return to their normal school life after unloading that title. They have to review the reports from all the departments, checking for any errors and problems in the preparations and operations within the sports festival, pick out things to improve on and compile them into the activity records for next year. Thus, the student council were busy with the follow-up work all the way to the last day of the second semester -- 25th December. And in accordance with tradition, they will have a celebration on that night.

Responsible for providing aid to the organising committee as a student council member, Basara was specially invited to join the celebration. While Mio and the other girls would very much like to have dinner with Basara before heading to the Demon Realm, they do not want to obstruct Basara's personal relations with others. Furthermore--

--He had already spent the whole Christmas Eve with us already.

Maria exhibited her culinary skills with Mio as her helper, and focused on roasting a whole turkey and making a cake at home. Basara ate the food with much gusto, and everyone had much fun. But -- they had played a game Maria had prepared in advance, causing all the girls to end up wearing sexy female Santa Claus outfits, and they all were done in once by Basara. [4]

"T-There isn't anything weird with this, right? After all, this *is* a Santa Claus outfit…"

Last night was the night which had the most number of males and females in bed together, thus the highest number of climaxes, thus also known as the National Spend-The-Night-Together Night. Under these conditions, for Mio and the rest seemed much more wholesome, being unable run to the home plate over fears of losing the powers they had. [5]

If any nit-picking were to be done, it would probably be those games Maria liked to play – those free-for-all activities rarely ever happens in real life.

…Anyway, we must buy next year's Christmas cake from a cake shop.

If they were to make one themselves, Maria might become paranoid again and prepare a lot of fresh milk and fruits in advance, and finally decorate them to become fine cuisine. [6] Speaking of which—

…The Demon Realm, huh…

Just exactly will that place be like? Other than Maria who had grown up there, even Basara, Yuki, and Kurumi had never been there before.

The Hero Tribe had only stepped into the Demon Realm once, but that was before they were born – that Great War that had only gotten more intense as time passed. Back then, the [God of War] Toujou Jin and the other elite warriors that caused Demons to become pale with the mere mention of their name had invaded fairly deep into the realm – but such large-scale confrontations had never happened again within these fifteen years that followed. In order to not unnecessarily fan the flames created by the war, Heroes were basically banned from entering the Demon Realm.

Of course, as this was Mio's first time going to the Demon Realm, she had done some exercise to calm her nerves and refresh herself. Because of that, Maria had invited Mio to be the first to use the bath after she had drawn it, but--

"Ah…"

Choosing to wait until she was the last one was indeed the right decision. Mio was able to leisurely soak within the water, letting the water warm up her body thoroughly. She then pulled open a drawer from within the low cabinet, and chose a set with suitable colours and patterns from the neatly folded sets of underwear, and began undoing the knot on her bathrobe.

Her large soft breasts were the first to emerge, followed by the rest of her body. Hanging the bathrobe over the chair's backrest, she put her two legs into the holes of the panties, and pulled it up.

When the panties hugged her butt tightly, her index fingers moved from her back to the front into the gap between her two legs, and moved up and down a few times after hooking the material, adjusting its grip; bending forward after picking up the bra that was a set together with the panties, she skilfully put the clasp together after putting her breasts within the bra.

Straightening up, Mio's hands then strongly pulled the clasp downwards, and after adjusting the side straps, she was done with putting on her underwear. After checking herself in the vertical mirror—

"Will this be too provocative…? But I don't have any choice."

She sighed. Mio's upper body was originally already breathtaking, but its size has been increasing ever since Basara had begun subjugating her. Finding anything cute and nice that she could fit into was already beginning to become a problem, and what she had left that could fit are either too old-fashioned or lingerie that were European Imports. In order for the deepening of their relationship and the occasional lifting of the aphrodisiac curse to increase their battle potential, Mio often needed to undress before Basara.

Since Basara would be watching, Mio of course wanted to present herself at her very best. This was a normal teenage girl's feelings.

"In the end, I am still being led on by Maria. This must be something…"

Recently, Mio would always agree to anything the moment she hears [Basara will definitely like that].

Now that Kurumi had also moved into the house together with Yuki, the two of them along with Mio would occasionally be subjugated by Basara himself -- speaking of which, those were all situations Maria created herself -- in those times, the Nonaka sisters were wearing those cute lingerie. To not lose to them, Mio could only make her advances in her own ways.

However -- other than Mio and Yuki who had done the Master-Servant contract with Basara and the ero-loving succubus Maria, there wasn't any need for Basara to be subjugating Kurumi, who had no duty to be accompanying them--

…Kurumi doesn't seem to hate Basara a lot recently.

Of course, Kurumi had put up resistance when her embarrassment kicks in, but had indulged in Basara's punishment in the end, and Mio knew the reason for that all too well -- obviously, Kurumi held feelings for Basara but had been hiding it. Although she was in no position to be criticizing others, Mio was someone who couldn't be frank with herself, so she can understand what Nonaka Kurumi liked about Basara so much.

Adding on that after the incident with Zolgear -- Maria also held feelings for Basara.

Only just feelings -- it can't be counted as love for now, more like purely enjoying pushing the rest into the pit of fire at fulfil her basic instincts as a succubus. Perhaps it was for that very reason that Maria--

…had chosen to grab onto Kurumi.

Maria seemed to be playing around with Kurumi due to her fascination with her. While Mio and the rest went to school, those two were basically staying together. For those two to interact with each other was something normal, and them becoming good friends wasn't something bad.

While those two would also go out to together, they've always refused to reveal where they had went. These days, Kurumi and Maria would always take a bath together, and from the gasps that came from the bathroom, Kurumi had probably already become Maria's plaything already. But even then Yuki as the older sister remained quiet; Yuki

was probably happy that Kurumi had made a close friend around her age.

Then again -- the Nonaka sisters' relationship seemed to have worsened in the past five years. Thus, whenever Maria had made Kurumi cry, Yuki felt like an older sister from being able to placate her cute little sister, which instead made her happy.

「…The overwhelming force of the Nonaka sister's relationship gives me a headache.」

To Mio, she would be happy as long as Maria was happy -- she only just hopes that Maria wouldn't make other people do ''those'' things every once in a while. As Mio where thinking about these things--

『---I'm back.』

Basara voice suddenly came from downstairs. *Crap*, Mio had originally wanted to finish changing and wait for him to return together with the others.

Mio then hurriedly put on the uniform that was hanging on the wall. She had discussed what she should wear when going to the Demon Realm with Basara and Yuki, and they all had decided to wear their uniform. A uniform would be the easiest to make the other parties what position they have in this Realm and what kind of life they are living.

Speaking of which, there is still some time before the agreed time - midnight; while worrying that Basara might be taking a bath too and also scolding herself for putting the cart before the horse by spending

so much effort on her underwear yet spending so little effort on her outer appearances, Mio began to leisurely groom herself despite her nervousness.

After putting on high knee socks and tying her hair into ribbons on both sides of her head, Mio was done dressing up. Spinning around once in front of the mirror, she touched up on the little details of her appearance. After taking in three deep breaths, Mio was also mentally prepared.

Leaving the room, Mio turned off the lights and closed the door. Before her was the scene she was already long used to seeing--

"……"

Naruse Mio carved the image before her eyes deep into her mind, and hoped to never forget it.

She must return to this place, becoming lost is not an option -- and vowed in her heart at the same time.

From the night Lucia visited the Toujou Residences bringing the news from the Demon Realm, Mio already had plenty of time to think about many things and mentally prepare herself.

-- Hailed as the strongest in history, the power of the previous Demon Lord Wilbert.

Even if she gave up her revenge on Zolgear, Mio couldn't possibly leave behind her current situation so as long she possessed her father's power.

That's why -- Mio and the rest had decided to visit the Demon Realm.

…However,

That does not mean, that she felt no anxiety and fear at all.

The Moderates Faction and the Current Demon Lord Faction -- the two major forces within the Demon Realm had been fighting each other over the power sufficient to control every corner of the Demon Realm. Within this situation, they had to advance to the Demon Realm.

Eighty percent of the people waiting for her there has had been through unimaginable trials and suffering.

-- As the sole child of the previous Demon Lord, perhaps this was her own fate.

Yet Basara and the others -- were all dragged into this because of her own choices and circumstances.

That's why, Mio can't show them any signs of wanting to give up before they departed.

They have said this to Mio before: If she didn't want to go, there isn't a need to force herself.

But in the end, Mio still chose to voluntarily take the risk.

She had to end everything. Her father's powers that she had inherited which brings about threats to her life -- Mio had to put an end before their situation becomes even worse. That's why--

"**…I'll be back soon.**"

Naruse Mio whispered to the empty room, turned off the lights, and closed the door.

With this, she will not turn back, and never stop.

Moving forward with her all, Mio slowly walked down the stairs.

Translator Notes and References

1. Jump up↑ relating to or denoting the practical use of psychic powers or paranormal phenomena
2. Jump up↑ The story of the celebration on Basara's side is in Volume 6 Chapter 4
3. Jump up↑ Audio-Visual Room
4. Jump up↑ A phrase used as a running gag in the series is used here. [Maria does something -> something happens -> curse activates -> Basara subjugates them]
5. Jump up↑ (Note:TLer here is Chinese) This part contains many Chinese sexual puns, which are almost impossible for me to fit into here. [Spending the night together] and [In the bed together] -> refers to having the sexual activity (sex) in the bed. [Run to home plate] also refers to the aforementioned sexual activity
6. Jump up↑ Body food. Preparing the food to be consumed on a person's body

Chapter 1 - Being with You in the Demon Realm

Part 1

Midnight came around, and Lucia appeared on time.

Jumping through space and appearing before Basara and the rest—

“Thank you for waiting…is everyone ready?”

Her tone and liveliness were completely different from Maria’s – relatively cold.

“—We’re ready, please begin.”

Toujou Basara nodded his head and replied. For the past month, everyone had been preparing for this journey.

Other than Maria, they were all wearing their school uniform, including Kurumi who had changed into the uniform she had worn to attend Hijirigasaka Academy’s Sports Festival. Although Yuki and Kurumi had their Hero battle clothes, they decided not to wear clothes that could stimulate the Demons.

Because -- including Basara, their positions today are not Heroes -- but instead just purely Mio’s family and friends.

For their clothes and daily necessities, they had gone with packing for a short trip overseas. According to Maria, their clothes could be washed anywhere and their weapons could be summoned anytime, to

there isn't any personal concerns; both Yuki and Kurumi only needed to prepare the medicinal items needed for the Heroes.

Thus, Basara and Mio each packed a single luggage case, and Yuki and Kurumi two each, each and every one being of a different size; Maria has her own residence within the Demon Realm, so she didn't pack anything.

"Alright, we will now depart."

With that, a large magic circle appeared in the space beside Lucia and slowly merged into the space, turning into a pitch-black hole.

"My god…"

Kurumi became amazed.

Of course Kurumi would be amazed. Normally, humans needed to fulfil some conditions before they are able to proceed to the Demon Realm. The Demon Race are beings in a higher class than Humans, and that the dimension the Demon Realm was higher than the dimension Humans are in; the principles in constructing a tunnel from a higher to lower dimension are complete different from that of from a lower to higher dimension.

One of the ways for to construct a tunnel was to make use of the overlapping between the Demon Realm and the Human Realm with its lessor numbers, to create space instability in some places and the natural phenomena -- The 「Dimensional Boundary」. Japan has some places where the Dimensional Boundary has occurred that are currently strictly controlled by the Hero [Village] – without their

authorization, those like the exiled Basara and Mio who has Demon blood within her are not allowed to use it. Jin who had pretended to be going to Dubai when in truth going to the Demon Realm when Mio and the rest started living together had probably used a Dimensional Boundary overseas.

…My dad has got many connections after all.

Even if Jin has been blacklisted by the Heroes in Japan, the Hero of the Great War is still very popular overseas, so finding a way to the Demon Realm wouldn't be something difficult for him.

And right now, Lucia who is a pure Demon had just created a very stable Dimensional Boundary that even Humans like Basara can cross, showing a glimpse of her power to them.

…But since Lucia is the Right-Hand Man of the leader of the Moderates Faction, such power was to be expected.

Amongst the Heroes, there were some specialising in creating spells that manipulate space, but Basara had never seen one that are as stable as the one before him right now. Of course, being able to construct barriers or manipulate space does not equate to strong battle power. Just then—

"There's nothing to be surprised about. Mio-sama has Demon blood, Basara uses a cursed sword, some of Kurumi's contracted spirits relations to the Demon Realm; just by taking advantage of those demonic fluctuations, creating a Dimensional Boundary that you all can pass through isn't that hard."

Lucia said, as if seeing through why they were so surprised.

"…What about me? My [Sakuya] shouldn't have any demonic fluctuations."

"—Affirmative, Yuki's spirit sword doesn't contain any demonic fluctuations."

Lucia slightly nodded in response to Yuki's question.

"That's why, I've used those demonic fluctuations within your body."

"Within my body…?"

"The fluctuations from the Master-Servant Contract you had made with Basara. Yuki sis and Mio-sama are both linked to Basara with my demonic power."

The intermediary Maria, explained to Yuki who was frowning from being unable to understand.

"So, it doesn't really matter even if Mio-sama doesn't have Demon blood; as for Kurumi, she recently has been through my succubus baptism a lot, so its fine even if she doesn't have any demonic spirits, they all would be able to pass through one-sama's Dimensional Boundary."

" ! …T-That was why you had done all those things?"

Upon seeing the red-faced Kurumi coyly [1] ask, Maria replied all smiles:

"You're wrong. I was unable to hold back my succubus instincts, and vented my libido on you."

“Y-You idiot! Why do I have to handle your libido!?”

“C-Calm down, Kurumi. If you start to Maria’s tone, you’ll fall into her trap.”

“ ! ….Big sis~”

Kurumi immediately plunged into Yuki’s arms after being warned by Mio, and Yuki began patting her head to placate her.

Yuki is showing such a happy face…such glaring big-sister’s-love radiance.

「……」

Lucia quietly watched all this, her eyebrows not wrinkling even once. Even while standing still in a very natural way, she didn’t show any sign of any flaws or struggles, while maintaining the Dimensional Boundary. Her outer-appearances are similar to Maria’s adult form, and she could very well be a S-Class expert.

“……Is anything wrong?”

Seeing Lucia sense Basara’s gaze, she replied [Nothing] and turned to Mio and the rest.

As if seeing what this meant, they became serious and stopped making a ruckus.

Toujou Basara thus said to the four of them:

「——Let’s go.」

They nodded -- and walked towards the Dimensional Boundary in a single file.

Part 2

They were immediately enveloped by an abyss-like darkness, and they suddenly lost their orientation.

As if like they were in outer space.

--However, that sensation was short-lived.

In the next moment -– they were all standing within an unfamiliar forest with the sweet smell of grass; as the wind blew, the rays of sunlight scattered on the ground also underwent some changes.

It's just as Maria said, there was a time difference from Japan.

"This place is—"

"--Adola Forest."

Lucia turned to face Basara, and answered his uncertainty. Just then—

"Adola Forest…is this place?"

Kurumi asked while shrinking her body away, making Mio surprised.

"You know this place?"

"Yes. Although our knowledge of the terrain in the Demon Realm is limited – everyone will definitely know about Adola Forest."

For Basara, Yuki, and Kurumi, all of their knowledge of this place came from their elders who had participated in the previous war. In the past, the Moderates Faction controlled majority of the Demon Realm, but then rapidly lost power and influence with the death of Wilbert, ending up in today's state. Comparing from fifteen years ago during the war, the current power map must have already changed a lot. But the Moderates Faction probably never accounted for this forest, since after all—

"—This place is the forest closest to the Demon Lord Wilbert's castle."

This might have been a suitable place for Basara and the rest to land, having been invited by the Moderates Faction after all. However—

"Lucia-oneesama – why didn't you directly bring us into Vereda City?"

Maria asked while frowning. The term Maria just said was also one that Basara and the other Heroes often heard – The city of the Demon Lord's Capital back when Wilbert was still on the throne.

As the ones who were invited by the current leader of the Moderate Faction Ramusas and other high-class Demons, it would usually be done as Maria said, sending them directly into the city to save trouble and simplify matters.

"From the viewpoint of crisis management, we have made the decision to try to avoid the areas near and within the city, to prevent any involvement and manipulation of a third party and be mistaken as an enemy invasion."

“You might be right, but do remember that the Current Demon Lord Faction is also after Mio-sama’s life—“

“I am well aware of that, and that is why I had chosen Adola Forest. This place is not far away from the city, it’s difficult to observe anything from outside, and it would be difficult for anyone in the surrounding areas to feel any Dimensional Linking.”

After Lucia replied without any change in her expression to the complaining Maria—

“Let us walk for a short distance, and there will be a horse carriage to bring us into the city – Please follow me.”

And proceeded to walk off in another direction into the forest.

“I’m sorry, everyone…”

Maria lowered her eyes while feeling bad, and Basara patted her shoulder and said:

“No need to say it like it’s your fault… I guess we better get moving then.”

“…Alright.”

Maria nodded, and Basara began following Lucia.

Much less a pavement, there wasn’t even an exposed path on the forest floor. Everyone walked in a single file slowly through the grass, and soon—

“Eh… When I had first about the Demon Realm, I had thought that it would be a dark and scary place; but in the end it was just as Maria

said, it wasn't much different from our world, and there's even a sun… There's so many different types of plants here, giving the forest so much fresh air, it just feels no different from the mountains in the countryside."

Mio expressed her feelings to the view of the natural forest before her. As it's their first visit, Basara consulted Maria on a few matters to gain some knowledge on things like cultures and customs; but upon seeing a view completely contrary to his expectations, everything felt fresh. It's just—

"What fresh air… Really, you just don't understand."

"What do you mean, Kurumi?"

Behind her, Kurumi sighed, and Mio turned back to ask.

"You have Demon blood, so you might not have noticed… While the views and scenes within the forest are indeed beautiful, the concentration of demonic power within this place is completely shocking. With such strong demonic fluctuations, it really gives people of coming to the Demon Realm."

Hearing Kurumi say tensely, Mio became surprised.

"Oh… Is it true, Basara?"

"Yes, the demonic concentration within this place are very strong. Remember Zolgear's house? It's similar to that."

Such thick demonic concentrations will probably lower the immunity system of a normal human, but as ones who had underwent the training from the Heroes, that might not be too much of a problem.

But as such strong demonic concentrations usually equates to a fairly powerful demon or evil spirit lurking around, they were unable to relax.

“Really…? In such a natural and beautiful place?”

Basara gave a bitter smile to Mio who muttered unbelievably, and turned his sight to another place.

“…Yuki, are you alright?”

“Ah, I’m fine.”

Beside Basara, Yuki nodded and replied, showing no hints of any stress within her expression.

…Probably because she’s the user of [Sakuya].

In short, the spirit sword can purify her body anytime, even weakening the demonic fluctuations from the Master-Servant Contract; it certainly is useful as a Hero, but it presents another problem in the Demon Realm. Being unable to use [Sakuya]’s original amount of power like within Zolgear’s mansion, the one most affected by the demonic concentration is undoubtedly Yuki.

Basara couldn’t see any abnormalities in Yuki right now. But before Yuki manages to get used to the demonic concentration, there would be a burden on her, so any repercussions appearing wouldn’t be strange at all.

“Yuki—“

Basara originally wanted to help Yuki carry one of the two luggage she was carrying, but instead retracted his words.

Yuki probably is already aware that the one most affected by the demonic concentrations in the Demon Realm will be her.

But yet she still agreed to go along with Basara and the rest. Basara's worries, might be contempt in Yuki's eyes.

"What is it, Basara?"

Replying, Yuki's breaths became slightly faster.

"Nothing. It's great if you're alright – let's go."

Hearing Basara expressing trust and worry, Yuki became slightly surprised.

"…Oh."

And happily smiled.

Just like that -- after following behind Lucia for a while, they saw an ancient-type wooden horse carriage with a window waiting for them in a more open area. The carriage would probably be able to easily fit more than ten people, and there were four black horses attached before it. However--

"T-The horses in the Demon Realm are very big…"

Mio said. The Human Realm had many horses like those used in agricultural activities, but they all pale into insignificance. The horses before them are at least three metres tall, its stature doesn't seem heavy and seemed more like racing horses.

“No, these horses are especially different. Horses of this size are rare in the Demon Realm.”

Two maidservants then appeared at the front of the carriage, most likely to be Lucia’s subordinates. They approached them after opening the door, and said respectfully:

“Everybody, please enter the carriage, and leave your luggage to us.”

And then carried their luggage onto the goods rack at the trailing end of the carriage. Just then--

“Ah, no need, I’ll carry this myself.” “Me too, sorry to cause inconvenience to you.”

After handing over the luggage containing their clothes and sundry items, the other luggage contains their assist tools [2], which would naturally be better if they were to carry it themselves.

After the two of them entered the carriage, Lucia entered last, and a maidservant closed the carriage door. After ensuring they the maids had gotten onto the coachman’s seat and gripped the reins, she said:

“--Everyone, we will be departing now.”

At the same time, the horses attached to the carriage began to move forward slowly. Not long after leaving the open area, the horse carriage got onto a dirt path and began to gain speed. While observing the scenery passing by the window, Basara asked:

“Um… How long will it approximately take to reach Vereda City?”

“--In terms of the units from your realm, it will be about an hour.”

Lucia answered without even looking at Basara from her position right at the edge of the seats.As they would all be under her care for the next hour, Basara had wanted to try to close the gap between them and her…but as her attitude is that cold, everyone hesitated on whether they should speak or not."

「……」

The depressing silence went on and on. What could be heard in the interior of the carriage, was only the sounds of the wheels of the horse carriage rolling on the path.

"……Ah, everyone, please look to your left!"

Suddenly, Maria said as if wanting to dissolve the awkwardness within the carriage. When everyone turned towards the voice to the left -- the horse carriage left the forest, and wide and droad hills came into view; in the bottom right of the window is the view of the many many buildings of the city. Surrounding the city, is the outer wall that seemed to have been made by cutting from a large piece of rock.

"Wow…"

A very spectacular view it was. That is likely the previous Demon Lord's royal capital -- Vereda.

"So the city with a castle at the centre of the urban is Vereda City?"

"Yes. That and the castle was governed by Mio-sama's father, His Majesty Wilbert, and its governor right now is His Majesty Wilbert's brother Ramusas-sama."

"……"

Listening to Maria's explanation, Mio silently griped Basara's hand while looking at the view through the window, and Basara held that cold and trembling hand.

As the scenery passed by the window without stopping, they got closer and closer to that far-away castle.

Part 3

After the horse carriage Basara and the rest were on followed around over half of the city's wall, they finally arrived at the back entrance of the castle.

Mio was the spiritual leader of the Moderates Faction as Wilbert's only daughter, and Basara and the others were Heroes. If they were to simply cross the urban district and be recognised, a large commotion would likely be created. Going around the urban district after entering the city was probably a good choice. After crossing the moat on the bridge let down, the horse carriage finally came to a stop. The door was then opened from the outside, and after Lucia alighted from the carriage--

"Mio-sama, and the other guests -- welcome to Vereda City."

Lucia formally welcomed them with a serious bow, and the other maids also bowed. The main guest is Mio, while Basara and the rest were accompanying her, thus--

"Err… I am Naruse Mio, I'll be under your care for the next few days."

Originally planning to remain amongst her companions, Mio then stepped forward, unsure of how she should be acting, tentatively bowing first before saying that.

"……Well then, please come this way."

Lucia said so, and the maids behind her bowed and went past them towards the horse carriage. They were probably going to get their luggage.

After handing their luggage over to them, Basara and the rest went into the city under the lead of Lucia. Even if they had entered through the back entrance, the ceiling was still pretty high, and the decorations were still very luxurious.

Much attention was undoubtedly given to the furnishings and lighting within the walkways and corridors, as they seem to tell many stories from the past. Of course, everything was spotless.

…As expected of the spiritual leader Wilbert's Moderates Faction's city.

The Royal Capital displays the prestige of the nation. Even though the Moderates Faction quickly lost power after Wilbert's death, the urban areas were still very vibrant from what they could see from the horse carriage; probably because from the civilians' viewpoint, this castle that symbolises the Moderates Faction preserves the vestiges of Wilbert when he was still alive for the sake of it.

Following Lucia, they crossed through the corridors filled with a solemn [3] atmosphere, and after a few turns -- they came before the door to the room at the end of a corridor.

“This is the room Mio-sama will be staying in during her visit here. The males’ room for Basara [4] is at another place, someone else will be coming later to show you the way.”

Opening the door after saying that, what they all saw behind the door turned Basara and the other speechless for a while. Not because it was stunning -- the truth was the opposite.

Opening the door after saying that, what they all saw behind the door turned Basara and the other speechless for a while. Not because it was stunning -- the truth was the opposite. The high and wide spaces and high-class furnishings that created a luxurious feel, are all completely absent in this room; the room only contained a plain bed, sofa, table, and otherbasic necessities of the lowest grade. After entering the room, it seems that the lighting is also poor, making the place fairly dim. Seeing a room like that--

“…From the furnishings seen on the way here and the decorations of the other rooms, this just isn’t a guest’s room but a warehouse for piling excess furniture. I’m fine with it, but is this really the room for the only daughter of the previous demon lord?”

Kurumi asked coldly.

“Ramusas-sama wanted you to use the rooms on this side.”

Lucia indifferently answered, not minding Kurumi’s gaze at all.

…I see, the same old trick.

Basara had heard from Takigawa that Ramusas held no goodwill to Mio. There were ill-will between each royal family members held over

seizing power, just like from a long time ago in the Human Realm -- from all indications, there was no need to anticipate the reunion between the so-called niece and uncle.

"……"

Mio lowered her eyes, unable to hide the sorrow from showing up in her eyes. She was originally looking forward to coming to the Demon Realm, hoping to experience some warmth from her blood relatives, but yet now she is receiving the cold shoulder.

…Since it's become like this.

There is no need for her to remain here for long. After thanking the maidservants who arrived to deliver their luggage, Basara then turned to Lucia--

"I understand… Since that is the case, we'll go along with the flow for now. Right now, can we ask for you to bring us to meet with Ramusas-sama? We all have our own lives to live, and we hope to return as soon as possible."

And said so very seriously. Only to see shake her head and reply:

"I'm very sorry. Ramusas-sama is currently out on business and is not in the city. He will be meeting you all tomorrow."

"Not in the city? Wasn't he the one who invited us here?"

Yuki asked with an eyebrow raised.

"Affirmative. If you had come when I had visited you, there would have been no problems at all with Ramusas-sama's schedule.

However, just like every one of you have your own lives to live, we also have our issues to settle. Especially now where it can be considered that we Moderates Faction is at war with the leader of the Current Demon Lord Faction Leohart."

Lucia then continued:

"As the representative leader of the Moderates Faction, Ramusas-sama is very busy with his usual office work, and coincidentally today he had matters where he could not be absent from. We had complied with you delaying your journey by a month, so can you not wait for just a single day?"

""……""

Since Lucia had said it that way, Basara and the rest could find no words to refute that at all.

"…Then why didn't you just wait until tomorrow to bring us here?"

In the end, Kurumi was only able to muster a complaint quietly.

"Thank you all for your kind understanding. Well then--"

As Lucia said that, someone knocked on the door and entered the room.

"…Please have some tea."

That was a beautiful brown-skinned maidservant. The girl pushing a metal cart loaded with a tea set was one that Basara and the rest recognised. Thus, Basara couldn't help but to say her name.

"Zest…!"

[Hello.] Zest nodded at Basara, and then said:

“It’s been a long time since I last saw you, Toujou Basara -- no, Basara. [5]

Seeing her, Kurumi then leaned over to Yuki’s ear and asked:

“….So she is that Zest?” “Yes, she was previously Zolgear’s subordinate.”

Yuki answered Kurumi who had never met with Zest.

“You seem well… This is great.”

“Yes. Thanks to your care, Zest is very grateful to you.”

Towards the expression Zest showed when Basara expressed his relief, he was somewhat surprised. Because Zest faintly smiled. Seeing her smile for the first time--

…She can already smile…

Basara lamented. After defeating Zolgear -- the Toujou household temporarily took in Zest, until the one sent by the Moderates Faction brought her back to the Demon Realm, having agreed to find a place for her. Back then until when Zest was almost killed by Zolgear who had deemed her to be a burden, her expression was always icily inorganic. When if she received protection as a witness, there were some uneasiness in handing over Zest who was of the Current Demon Lord Faction over to the Moderates Faction; so considering Zest’s power and the possibility that she might escape from the Demon Realm, Basara had told her that she can return any time before she had left. On their way here and until they were brought to this room,

there were still worries on whether did Zest receive any ill-treatment -- seeing that it was all himself over thinking, it was all great. However--

"……!"

Toujou Basara line of sight was drawn to another change in Zest, and he gulped.

--In Basara's mind, Zest was a female with an extremely good body figure. It's only been two months since they had defeated Zolgear and handed Zest over to the Moderates Faction, but yet Zest's breasts had definitely gotten bigger. Not only Basara, this shock surpassed that of this sudden reunion in Mio and Yuki, causing them to stare at her in disbelief.

"……Ah."

Seemingly having noticed their gazes on her, Zest gently twisted her body shyly red-faced. Even then, her breasts with a shocking amount of volume sensationally shook left and right.

"S-Sorry…!"

Basara hurriedly averted his eyes, and Zest shook her head and said [It's fine].

"It's not surprising that you'll be surprised… Even I did not expect that my body would become like this. According to the doctors -- this change is due to the release from my previously repressed state, not due to something like an illness, so there is no need for any worry."

"…--I see."

Hearing Zest say that, Basara answered in a low voice.

Ever since they gained victory from Zolgear, even Zest along with Maria and Sheera had escaped from Zolgear's control. Since this was the result, rather than saying [change], it would be more appropriate to call it returning to the rightful original appearance. Just then--

"Zest will be responsible for Basara's[6] daily life while you are here, so please do not hesitate to call for her if you ever need anything. Zest -- you will be bringing Basara[7] to his room later."

"--Understood, Lucia-sama."

Seeing Zest bowing on receiving her order, Lucia said [Good.] and continued:

"You're all probably become tired on your way here. There's still some time before dinner, so please get some rest in this room. You'll be notified when your meals are ready. I'll be taking my leave now."

And Lucia turned to leave after taking a bow -- but then stopped before the door and turned back to say:

"Maria -- remember to come to my room after drinking your tea, and give me a detailed report on all of your actions over there."

"…….Alright, understood, Lucia-oneesama."

After Maria nodded, only then did Lucia leave the room for real.

Getting some rest in this room before having dinner, actually has the same meaning as [do not leave this room].

As lamenting wouldn't change anything, Basara and the rest then tentatively chose to drink the tea Zest had prepared for them. After sitting down on the sofa around the large table in the center of the room, Zest placed tea cups before them and raised the white porcelain teapot to pour tea into Basara's cup first. Basara then raised his cup to have a taste.

"Ah… The aroma and taste is very similar to the red tea we usually have."

The tea in Demon Realm very different, so considering that this is everyone first time here, I tried to choose a tea that has a taste very similar to the ones in the Human Realm… Is it to everyone's tastes?"

"Yes, it's very good… Thank you, Zest."

"…Is that so, that's great."

Zest slightly smiled happily.

"You two seem to be very chummy… I haven't drank any tea yet but why is it that I am getting heated up?" [8]

Mio said while shooting daggers with her eyes while looking at Basara and Zest talking.

"I'm sorry… I didn't have that intention…"

Zest said with a pained expression, and poured tea into Mio's cup.

Later -- the atmosphere in the room became tense. Mio's adoptive parents who she had believed to be her real parents, were killed by the high-class demon Zolgear -- and Zest was his subordinate.

Of course, Zest was only following orders from her master Zolgear, and was unrelated to the death of Mio's adoptive parents; but emotions wasn't something that could be delineated [9] , and it was for that reason that Basara had left Zest to the Moderates Faction. Even if Mio had given up on killing her sworn enemy Zolgear, immediately making her live together with the subordinate of her sworn enemy was just too cruel to her. It was for those reasons that Mio had practically not said anything to Zest when she stayed in the Toujou Residences temporarily, and Basara had left Mio as she is.

However -- when Zest stepped back after pouring Mio's tea, Mio raised her tea cup and said:

"Really… For me to be worried that you would be abused, it was all for nought."

Those words bringing a hint of snorting, caused everyone to be surprised, especially Zest who had become frozen. However, that couldn't be helped.

"Eh -- W-Why…?"

Realising that everyone was now looking at her, she frowned in confusion. Most likely, she hadn't realised -- what the words she just said really meant. Those words she had just said so easily, probably unloaded much of what's on Zest's heart. Seeing Mio become like this, it seemed very cute in Basara's eyes, hence he brought his hand to pat Mio's head.

"Oi, what are you doing, Basara -- why are you suddenly acting like that?"

“Nothing, it’s for no reason. I only suddenly felt the urge to do this.”

Basara said to the puzzled Mio who made no actions to stop him.

Yuki, Maria, and kurumi smiled bitterly, and Zest quietly held back her tears. The tense atmosphere disappearing, warmth filled the space within the room.

Part 4

While having tea, everyone talked about what they should be doing for their future.

Regretfully, it appears that they were not very welcome here, and all unanimously agreed that they should all return to the Human Realm as soon as possible after finishing what they needed to do. But right now, Mio was unable to decide whether she should hand over Wilbert’s power, and she only know that she can’t make a decision she would regret. Speaking of which, there were people like Ramusas who wanted Mio to hand over Wilbert’s power, as well as people who wanted to crown Mio as the new Demon Lord within the Moderates Faction; even though Mio had no intention of ever becoming a Demon Lord, she has to carefully listen to the views of both side and make an informed final judgement. As Ramusas is not in this city right now, they could only ask Ramusas to explain and clarify the consideration of both sides of the Moderates Faction. After discussing for quite a while--

“The report Lucia mentioned about… Is it referring to what happened when you were threatened by Zolgear?”

Basara impulsively turned towards Maria and asked something that caught his attention.

“That’s right… Even if it was my mother that was taken as a hostage, my actions would not be pardoned at all because of that.”

Maria showed a self-deprecating smile when answering Basara’s question.

“Speaking of which, I didn’t expect to find a cold-blooded woman much icier than my older sister. Why are you sisters so different…?”

“…Kurumi, what do you mean by that? Your older sister will not get angry, so please tell me.”

Kurumi’s words caused Yuki to become oppressive, pressing closer towards Kurumi with every single word.

“N-Nothing! W-What I wanted to say is, your coldness wouldn’t cause discomfort to anyone, but Lucia’s coldness will cause--“

As Kurumi frantically tried to explain--

“So you mean… [I’m very very sorry]?”

A sighing voice suddenly sounded out from within the room.

“----?”

At the same time, Toujou Basara felt a weight suddenly appearing on his thighs. Lowering his sights, a small young-looking succubus was

already sitting on his thighs. Seeing the girl which seemed even younger than Maria--

“Ah--!”

The others also then noticed the presence of that small succubus and became shocked. Then--

“M-Mama?!”

When Maria exclaimed with surprise, the small succubus -- Sheera let out a wry smile and said:

“Arara~, why did you exclaim, Maria~? Are you that happy from seeing your beloved mother~?”

“Not that… I was only just shocked, seeing you suddenly appear from out of nowhere.”

But Sheera ignored Maria’s retort, and tilted her head back to face Basara and said:

“Sorry, little Basara… [10] Aunty also wants to apologise to Mio[11] and everyone else. Our Lucia seemed to have shown everyone some disrespect.”

The loli-succubus mother then giggled after saying that.

“I-It’s fine… It’s been quite a while since we last saw you, Sheera [12]. You seem just as lively as ever.”

The first time Basara saw Sheera was when she appeared before Maria who had lost all hope thinking that she had been killed. She probably cracked a joke sensing that the situation was progressing down the

wrong direction. Sheera was also fairly serious when she apologised -- but her personality is even livelier and more mischievous than Maria. Before the emissary [13] from the Moderates arrived at their house, both Sheera and Zest had stayed in the Toujou Household, and those days were especially lively and noisy, they had almost died from being played around in Sheera's hands.

…but then again,

Although Basara had only said his greetings at their reunion just now, he is right now especially anxious. Before Sheera had said anything, he had not sensed anyone sitting on his thighs, much less anyone entering the room. Of course, drinking some more tea might have made him relax a bit, but he had never once put down his guard. It appears that as Maria's mother, Sheera was definitely no pushover. Just as everyone was becoming scared of Sheera's unpredictability, unable to say anything--

"Really, just from who did she inherit her coldness from…?"

Sheera said while supporting her face with her hand:

"Lucia is indeed very serious person with a very strong sense of responsibility… But it further intensified after becoming Ramusas's aide~."

From her speech patterns, one can probably take a glimpse into what level the position she held within the Moderates Faction was.

Since Sheera had called the previous Demon Lord's brother, the current leader of the Moderates Faction Ramusas without adding any

honorifics, and even called Wilbert's only daughter [little sister]. The reason why the emissary from the Moderates Faction had backed down in the past from Sheera's smile when she had demanded for Maria who had assisted Zolgear to go with her was likely also for the same reason.

"She is indeed very careful and hardworking… But that personality of hers~~. The fear within Lucia's subordinate's hearts must be pretty abundant."

"I see… The Zest must have had a pretty hard time as a junior."

After listening to Sheera, Basara then expressed concern for Zest who was standing by the wall, and--

"…Not really, because I am not one of Lucia's subordinates."

"Is it so? Then just now Lucia asking you to look after me was…"

"Lucia-sama was only repeating the task that was pre-allocated to me."

" ? Then who was the one who ordered you to look after me--"

Just as Basara raised another question in response to Zest's reply--

"Ara~, that would of course be me, little Basara~."

The reply came not from Zest, but from his thighs.

"So Sheera is Zest's…?"

"That's right~. I felt it would be better if someone who had been working under Zolgear were to not immediately work under Lucia.

Of course, Lucia didn't give her special treatment just because of her origins… it would just be a little too much for her little sisters under her to separate work and personal matters just like Lucia; needless to say, asking Zest[14] to assimilate into them is also the same. So the best course of action, was to let me who knew what had happened to take care of her~."

Behind them, Zest lowered her eyes and then said:

"I really don't know how I should give my gratitude to Sheera-sama… In my work as a maidservant, I am still lacking in many areas; it's all thanks to the fact that I'm under Sheera-sama, that I'm able to continue working here until now."

"Ah~, no need to worry about it. About the matter on you and Zolgear, I also have some stuff that I need to think about."

"I see…"

Toujou Basara expressed his understanding of the situation. For Zest to be able to smile while working under Lucia, it had very much surprised him -- and it turned out to be his misunderstanding. The reason Zest was able to smile, was because Sheera had taken Zest in as her subordinate after considering her circumstances. That why--

"…I'm really thankful to you, Sheera."

Basara lowered his head towards Sheera who sat on his thighs and expressed his thanks. Sheera did understand Zest's circumstances and position in that incident, but there was also the thing about becoming

Zolgear's hostage. Normally speaking, she had no responsibility to be taking care of Zolgear's subordinate, thus--

"Don't worry about it. You all had always been taking care of Maria, and had even fought with your lives because of me… See it as my compensation to you."

Sheera bitterly smile and said. Just then, Maria finished her tea in a single breath--

"--Now then, I guess it is time for me to make my atonement."

After saying that calmly, Maria then got up from the sofa."

"It'll be fine. Would you like me to come along with you?"

"No need, Mio-sama. These things need to be accounted by me alone… I will report every single thing that I have done, and let myself be scolded by Lucia-oneesama."

Maria shook her head at Mio who was worried about her--

"Everyone please continue resting -- I will be back quickly."

And after saying that with a smile, Maria left the room with heavy steps.

Part 5

After leaving the room, Naruse Maria lowered her head and sighed, then--

"------"

Taking off her smile, her expression became frozen. Taking slow steps, Maria then walked slowly towards Lucia's office. Within the spacious Vereda City -- Maria crossed the walkways alone.

--Maria had passed countless ministers and maids, but she chose to not talk to them. All along the way, her sight remained fixated on the floor.

…It'll be fine.

Maria was not worried about herself -- but rather, Basara, Mio, and the others. With the help from the Master-Servant Contract, Basara, Mio, and Yuki's battle potential had underwent enhancements multiple times. With Kurumi adding to that, Zest also joined in now that they have come here.

Compared with Maria who could temporarily raise her battle potential by changing to her adult form, Zest already would usually have power similar to that of a high-class demon. Zest was different from Maria who is only good at housework, having gone through the training for a maid and is able to provide Basara and the others with powers and help of a level similar to them.

…It'll all be fine.

While walking slowing with her head lowered, Maria made a slight smile at the confidence within her heart. Soon -- Maria stopped. Raising her head, a door to a room was before her.

"……"

Tightly clenching her right fist, Maria knocked on the door twice, and said:

"--Lucia-oneesama, Maria is here."

From behind the door came a light…yet clear voice--

[…Is it enough?]

And raised a question to Maria. To which Maria nodded and said:

"Yes… That would be enough, thank you for letting me have some time."

A few seconds later--

[I see -- then please come in.]

The icy cold voice that sent chills through one's spine came through the door -- and the thick wooden door began to open by itself.

Part 6

After the demise of Wilbert, the crowning of the new Demon Lord Leohart created a new force in the Demon Realm. And that -- is the merging of the Radicals and Conservative Factions to become a single Current Demon Lord Faction.

However -- the power of making the decisions in the highest levels of the Current Demon Lord Faction, was not held by Leohart.

Because of the existence of those high-class Demons whose age was already uncountable.

The Council, the group that had elected Leohart to be the new Demon Lord, was made up of the seven deadly sins [15]-- that is 「Lust」 「Gluttony」 「Greed」 「Sloth」 「Wrath」 「Envy」 and 「Pride」, symbolising the seven seats within the organisation. Right now--

"--It really was unexpected, for Zolgear to have died like that."

"That's right. Once I think about his playground that I can never go to again; I can't help but to feel regret over it."

"What's the problem with that… He's not the only one who can open a playground, so there wouldn't be any problems if someone were to succeed him, right? If we were to lose the banquet and women just like that, it'll be just way too wasteful."

Those Demons, are currently within the Royal capital of the Current Demon Lord Faction -- in the lowest floors of the city, the high-class conference room for the Cabinet that few knew about[16]. They were all sitting around the round table in the center of the room, casually chatting before the starting of the assembly, with the topic being about -- the death of the one who sat on the seat of 「Lust」, Zolgear.

"Speaking of which, Zolgear just had to die when his suspension was being looked into… His suspension was for planning to make a move against Wilbert's only daughter, was it retribution?"

"You mean being cursed by Wilbert? Stop cracking jokes… What I think is, he probably caused his own death from playing around too much, since he spends most of his day playing around with those masterpieces of his."

[Seems logical] As almost everyone began to smile--

"……"

A certain someone had their eyes shut, remaining silent since the beginning. Sitting separate from the seven deadly sins, the young demon sitting in the eighth ranked seat -- with lean brows, that is the Current Demon Lord Leohart.

He listened to the endless chatting revolving around the death of Zolgear--

…A bunch of lustful old thieves.

He very much despised them. For him to not say out his thoughts, he had his reasons.

--Right now, Cardinal holds authority equal to or more than Demon Lord Leohart.

Rhetorically on the surface, it was to prevent the over-concentration of power. Cardinal is not only the advisory body for the Demon Lord, if they determine that the Current Demon Lord is abusing the power, they have the power to remove someone from the throne. However -- in truth, that is not really the case.

Leohart's track record might have been outstanding during the previous war, but him being able to sit on the throne was purely because to Cardinal, he was the best and most useful tool.

On one side, by pushing for the young Leohart for the throne of the Demon Lord, they are able to display the assimilating of the younger generation into the political core, attracting even more support for

them; on another side, they will be able to exert political influence through Leohart who they had supported. Even if the power of a single member of Cardinal is below that of Leohart, they are able to instantly strip him of his throne should he ever oppose them.

So in truth, the political core has never assimilated the younger generation into it at all, instead reverting to the political system that of before Wilbert came onto the throne. So currently, if Leohart wants to preserve his position as the Demon Lord, he needs to be of use to Cardinal.

But at best, that was only enough to maintain status quo.

…Just you wait.

Demon Lord Leohart slowly opened his eyes, and gazed upon the members of Cardinal with eyes filled with enmity, and secretly vowed.

…I will definitely personally eliminate you, the leeches of the Demon Realm, thoroughly.

Leohart will not be willing to play as Cardinal's puppet forever. For constructing a new order within the Demon Realm, peacefully suppressing the Moderates Faction and other opposing forces is of utmost importance -- but critically, he will have to eradicate the old vermin before his eyes first. Of course, having lived for a very long time in the Demon Realm, their influence is immense and immeasurable; if he were to make any missteps, he himself will be sentenced to death. Still, Leohart's determination did not waver even one bit. Thus--

…Firstly.

Leohart looked towards an empty seat at the table, but it was not Zolgear's seat representing 「Lust」. Including Leohart's seat, only six out of the eight seats were filled.

That's right -- there is still a person who still has not arrived.

--And just then, the coarse thick door to the conference room suddenly began to slowly open, and then--

"I'm sorry everyone, for being late…"

A high-class demon with a deep voice entered the room, and sat down at the seat for the highest ranked amongst the seven deadly sins. Belonging to the president of the unified management of Cardinal -- Archduke Belphegor.

"What was wrong, Archduke Belphegor? You came especially late today."

A member of Cardianl asked Archduke Belphegor who has appeared long after the set time.

"Ah… I had lost track of time while settling the matter about Zolgear."

Belphegor gave a dark smile while replying.

"Didn't we agree some time ago that before we decide on his successor, I will be filling in the seat for the seat of 『Lust』? I hold no interest at all to his research and property…but that playground of his

is another matter, it'll be a pity to lose it. And so I was thinking, that I should take over the management of that place."

Those words made another member of Cardinal smile.

"Hoho… That's great. Handing over that place to Belphegor-sama is indeed proper, and now I no longer have to worry about finding a place to play."

Representing [Sloth], Belphegor is currently the oldest living demon in existence and held a seat ranked higher than Zolgear. It has been said that his harem in the city is made up of as many as four.

However, the president of Cardinal will naturally be no pushovers. Standing at the pinnacle of the Current Demon Lord Faction, Belphegor is himself symbolises the Ancient Times.

"I'm really sorry for making His Majesty wait for these old bones… I've been busy turning those women into my property one by one, so my sense of time is not really that good."

Hearing Belphegor say so without any heavy breathing or redness in his face at all--

"…Liveliness is a good thing to have, Belphegor."

Leohart replied in a heavy tone. Compared to Wilbert's power inherited by Mio or the leader of the Moderates Faction Ramusas, Leohart wanted to eliminate Belphegor much more. Thus, he must never let him realise the killing intent that exists within him at all.

After that, with a [Well then, everyone], Belphegor announced:

“We shall begin today’s meeting now -- first up, the topic will be about the conditions of the remains of the spirits excavated not too long ago in the Western regions.”

Part 7

In this heavy atmosphere, a pair of succubus sisters were looking at each other.

Naruse Maria and the older sister Lucia.

Maria had come to Lucia’s office to report about the events of her being coerced [17] by Zolgear and the events related to that before and after it.

Although Maria had successfully rescued Mio from the high-class demon Zolgear’s palm, her mother Sheera was instead taken hostage and had to provide her assistance through threats. Maria had originally desperately complied with Lucia’s orders to ignore Zolgear’s threats and put Mio’s protection as a higher priority; but she instead sunk deeper due to a misstep and obeyed Zolgear -- fooling Mio and the rest and pulling them into even more danger. That was roughly the report Maria gave, reporting each and every crime she had made.

And right now -- the heavy atmosphere of the room was created from waiting for Lucia to say something after Maria had finished her report. In the atmosphere that made people hold their breaths in anticipation, Maria made no movements at all, and in the end--

“--Is that really all?”

Lucia spitted out in an extremely cold voice. After that--

“Maria… I am very well aware of your love for mother, and I’m not blaming you for that. I am able to somehow understand your feelings when you found out the news of okaa-sama being taken hostage and how you felt when you made your moves after that.”

“……I understand that.”

Maria quietly nodded.

“It’s been hard on you, Maria… You must’ve been through a lot of pain, and your heart must be in a mess now. You are a very kind child, and I believe that betraying Mio-sama and Basara’s trust in you to help the scum holding okaa-sama hostage must have brought unbelievable pain.”

And Lucia followed up with some kind words -- using not a warm tone, but one that could instantly freeze boiling water.

Thus, Naruse Maria then wordlessly raised her sight.

“------”

And looked into the Lucia’s eyes -- who sat on a chair opposite her behind the office table.

Her older sister’s eyes were as Maria expected, cold enough to send chills through her, and as for her expression -- it held even more oppressive pressure than Basara, causing Maria to gulp.

“However -- even then, what you should have been doing back then was to carry out your mission of protecting Mio-sama, not worrying

over the safety of okaa-sama, much less defecting to help Zolgear. It's just -- I had thought that you were not that foolish, so why were you?"

Lucia then asked again:

"If you were the kind of person that would make this kind of mistake, I would've already opposed you becoming Mio-sama's guardian in the nomination stage, as Ramusas would. However, why did you do something so foolish where you even betrayed those close to you?"

"……"

To Lucia's question, Maria already had an answer within her heart, but was unable to voice it out. Because she was didn't want to believe that was the truth -- much less say that it was. However--

"Tell me, Maria -- just how did Zolgear even manage to delude you?"

Yet Lucia pressed her again. Her shrewd older sister before her is not someone who you can make it past by stalling with silence or with lies.

…Additionally.

If Maria remained silent, then it wouldn't end with just Maria's punishment. Either Sheera or Lucia may be viewed as the reason for Maria's crimes. And for not stopping Maria, they might be investigated -- something that must not happen no matter what.

The two of them are family that Maria is proud id. The reason Maria committed those crimes, is because her power is insufficient -- there was definitely no responsibility on Lucia or Sheera. Thus--

"……He told me, about something."

Maria decided to give up resisting and reveal the truth, and spitted it out:

"The reason Mama lost power and turned like that -- was because she gave birth to me."

"------"

Lucia then stuttered with a shaking voice, slightly widening her eyes.

…I see, it really is the case…

Lucia now understood. Maria has a very soft heart, but her sense of responsibility is very strong. So even if the circumstances caused conflict within her heart, and that was why Lucia had deeply believed Maria would never go as low as helping Zolgear.

…I see.

In the space out of Maria's sight under the table, Lucia clenched her fist.

Trying to suppress the boiling rage without making any movements.

--What Zolgear told Maria, is indeed the truth.

Lucia and Maria's mother Sheera was the first amongst the succubus race to become a high-class demon, someone who was a well-known figure in the Demon Realm. In the past, Sheera possessed a lot of power, and rumours say that she was a close ally to the strongest Demon Lord Wilbert.

However -- that Sheera one day, for one reason, lost over half of her power.

That, was giving birth to Maria. Everything was fine when Sheera gave birth to Lucia, yet she lost over half her power when she gave birth to Maria -- even becoming unable to even maintain her own original outer appearance, and assumed an appearance even younger than the Maria right now.

However -- everyone else including Lucia were always very careful, not letting Maria find out about it.

The moment she finds out her own birth caused her cute Mother to lose her power and beauty, a heavy blow will undoubtedly be dealt to that child's heart. As Sheera was someone very special to her, the aftereffects will definitely be very severe.

So as to not let Maria feel any guilt or trauma about her own existence, Sheera and Lucia teamed up with the people around them, protecting Maria from ''that'' together -- by hiding its existence.

It would be impossible to hide the fact that Sheera lost her power, but it might be possible to cut all connections of that to Maria. Thus, everyone lied to Maria that Sheera had lost her powers before having Maria, and spent all efforts on supporting this cover-up. Amongst the people in the Moderates Faction that Sheera was close with, there were quite a number who knew the truth due to being present during childbirth and other reasons, and they felt regret and sympathy over the blow from losing that overwhelming power. Both Lucia and Sheera had went around asking people to not leak out the truth, to the

point where Wilbert had even agreed to persuade people to protect the secret. With the cooperation of so many people, they managed to hide the cruel truth from Maria and let her grow up uneventfully.

…But he dared to…!

Lucia is already furious to the point where she was already gritting her teeth. Though she didn't know where and how did Zolgear of the Current Demon Lord Fation got that info where only a small fraction of the people in the Moderates Faction knew -- for him to be still harming people even after his death, he is lowest and dirtiest scum. What Lucia wanted the most was to personally end his life, but from the looks of his psionic response suddenly disappearing when tracking him, he's probably already dead.

"……"

While the frustrated Lucia tried to suppress her rage--

"……I'm sorry, Lucia-oneesama…"

Maria seemed to take Lucia's silence as anger directed at her, and lowered her head and said:

"The mama onee-sama respected the most, was snatched away by me…"

"That--"

Hearing Maria say monotonously, Lucia wanted to try to stop Maria train of thought. Perhaps, Maria thought Lucia's strict attitude was the result of her causing Sheera to lose her power. Or maybe she thought

that that was her responsibility, and thus went down the wrong path of wanting to save Sheera alone. But--

…That's not it.

The reason Lucia had been strict with Maria was that as the aide of the current leader of the Moderates Faction Ramusas, her responsibilities are now completely different from her previous post. Having to order her subordinates around and make judgements from time to time, she of course had to be partial and show no favouritism; even when her own little sister became her own subordinate, she must still stick to her principals.

And also, the responsibility of Sheera losing her powers didn't fall squarely on Maria's shoulders. Sheera had decided to have children despite knowing that there was that risk, and Lucia and even supported her mother's decision; and Maria had not disappointed them, being born healthily.

Thus, Lucia very much wanted to say「You're wrong」「It's not like that」. You -- the succubus named Maria, had been born with blessings from many people.

However -- Lucia was unable to say it out loud.

Right now, she is not Maria's older sister, but still Ramusas's aide. She still had to hand down the punishment to her subordinate who had done wrong, and carry it out as soon as possible. Hence--

"…I now fully understand your reasons for your betrayal."

Lucia stood up, putting aside her feelings as a family member -- as an older sister, and then frankly said with the expression and tone that of Ramusas's aide:

"But even then -- your mission is to protect Mio-sama, and putting aside any personal reasons, being swayed by personal emotions and putting your protection target into danger is definitely not allowed."

Lucia began walking slowly towards Maria, and continued:

"As for your err, Ramusas-sama had given me full authority -- are you ready?"

"…Yes."

Maria nodded slightly and replied.

Thus -- Lucia materialised her weapon in her right hand, a whip specially made from the leather of the magical creature Behemoth. Standing before Maria while looking at her own little sister with cold eyes, Lucia slowly raised her right hand holding the whip--

"--Could you be more lenient?"

A voice suddenly came from beside them to stop Lucia.

" ! --Basara!"

Maria's shocked voice sounded out, naming the one who was leaning against the wall to the right of them.

"……How did you come in here?"

In contrast to the shocked Maria, Lucia only frowned and asked.

“Just now… Sheera suddenly appeared in the room you brought us to.”

Basara began explaining:

“When I asked her how did she suddenly appear on my thighs, I found out that it was just one of her usual pranks -- through one of the magical space connecting tunnels made everywhere in case of an emergency. Thus I guessed that there should be one in your office too, and asked her to let me use it. As Maria seemed to be taking very long, I became worried.”

Basara looked at Lucia eyes, his eyes filled with coldness that seemed different from Lucia’s.

…I see, so this is…

According to past reports, Lucia somewhat understood Basara’s personality to a certain extent.

This former Hero teen while having a very warm and kind side, has a very cold side to him as well. Even when he was critically injured by Lars, he was still able to see his true side, and joined hands in the shadows.

Later, he had joined up with Lars to trick Zolgear and successfully managed to rescue the kidnapped Mio and Sheera -- even managing to defeat Zolgear. The first time Lucia met him was about a month ago when she had visited to invite them, and bringing them over to the Demon Realm will be her second time meeting him. As Lucia had

only seen images of Basara, she has had some doubts about his other side, but now she can see that it was real.

……Speaking of which… Really, Mother?

Having closed the door properly, Lucia was temporarily unable to figure out how did Basara enter the room, but he had actually unexpectedly used Sheera's space tunnels. While Lucia knew of its existence, she never realised her own office wasn't an exception, making her feel -- she is far less than mother[18]. After taking a mental sigh, Lucia straightened her heart, looked at Basara and said:

"--However, that person will not accept your request so easily, right?"

"The reason Maria assisted Zolgear, is because she was only thinking of saving her mother Sheera. Thus, if Maria had to take any other responsibility because of Zolgear, I hoped that she would lend a hand… That was what I had said to her."

Basara's thought process was justifiable and reasonable, but it just just way too difficult to believe that Sheera would accept Basara's request just because of that. If anyone else other than the creator of those secret passages were to find out of its locations and methods to utilise it, its usability and practicality would be lowered. As the secrets surrounding them would very likely be revealed once used by any unauthorised persons, it has to be used when all alternatives have been exhausted for it to be most effective. Sheera might not have fully understood that logic…

If anything -- Sheera seems to have rated the youth Basara very highly'. Lucia thought quietly, and then continued:

"…I understand. It's no wonder that person would show such affections for her daughter… But, let me ask you -- why do you want to shield Maria? No matter how young I am, I am still Ramusas-sama's aide, and even if you have been exiled, you are still a Hero -- you do realise that by trespassing by office, you are in no position to be defending yourself if you were to be disposed of?"

Lucia's warning caused Maria to turn pale.

" ! --H-Hold on! Basara is--"

"Shut up, Maria -- I am currently speaking with Basara here."

Cutting off Maria's retort, Lucia then turned to face Basara.

"…I am well aware of that, as well as the consequences too."

Hearing Basara's reply--

"…Then why did you still do it? Are you not afraid of death?"

With those words, Lucia hinted that it wouldn't be weird even if the cost of his actions was death.

"Of course I am afraid of death… However, there are some things that one can never give in to despite one's fear of death. Indeed, the family of the succubus Maria are you and Sheera, and she is part of the Moderates Faction, shouldering the big responsibility of protecting the daughter of the late previous Demon Lord. But still--"

Basara said firmly:

"Right now, I will repeat what I had already said to the female demon you had sent to bring back Maria… This girl known as Naruse Maria,

is my family; here, she is my precious sister, and I will not allow anyone to harm her -- even if you are her blood-related sister, you are no exception."

" ----! "

That answer caused Maria to tremble, and then--

"Not only me, even Yuki who was in real danger and got implicated has already forgiven her. This incident had left no grudges in any of us, Maria has already repented thoroughly -- then again, wasn't it you guys who had sent just Maria alone to protect Mio?"

Taking a new breath, Basara then said to Lucia harshly:

"Before you punish her for neglecting her duties, you guys should be reviewing what responsibilities you have in this -- isn't that right, Lucia?"

Within Toujou Basara's heart, there were three things that he had to settle and confirm while in the Demon Realm no matter what.

Firstly, to solve the problems left behind by Wilbert's power within Mio.

Secondly, to confirm the status and condition of Zest who had been handed over to the Moderates Faction.

…And thirdly…

To stop 「Maria」 from receiving punishment for assisting Zolgear.

Mio's problems with the politics and circumstances of the Demon Realm goes a long way, so it naturally can't be immediately solved.

But now that he had confirmed that Zest was being treated well, next came Maria.

And for that--

…He had to make the other party agree to give it up.

Lucia is Ramusas's aide, so as long as she agrees to give up on Maria's punishment, the people of the Moderates Faction would not chase after Maria to take responsibility. To Basara's declaration to protect Maria to the end--

"……So that's how it is. Toujou Basara, I understand what you are getting at."

Lucia showed that she understood it.

"『Not allowing anyone to harm family』 Those words does really sound nice. However, do you really mean that you will unconditionally forgive, disregard, and connive the mistakes your family makes?"

"…As long as I know of her wrongdoings, I will immediately correct it, and sometimes even warn or scold her. However--"

Basara continued:

"The two things being mentioned are completely different. The reason Maria obeyed Zolgear, was purely completely to save Sheera--"

"--Even then, she should've told either you or me the situation, and sought for assistance; yet this child put her personal feelings first and acted on her own, causing Mio-sama to have fallen into Zolgear's

hands. Although things have ended well luckily with no serious consequences, it was just only the results that were not grave. Maria's thought to help Mother might deserve sympathy, but what she did was completely not right -- is that not it?"

"That…!"

Lucia was right, and Basara stuttered, unable to retort.

"Additionally, Basara -- you may not have noticed, but you yourselves have done something wrong." <refers>referring not only Basara here</ref>

"…We?"

"That's right." Lucia nodded and said:

"After the incident with Zolgear -- you had used 『It was all to save her mother』, such nice words as an excuse to not administer punishment, never scolding or punishing her even once at all, probably to try to put her heart at ease. After that, you all had chosed to continued living with her like nothing has ever happened."

"…And what is wrong with that?"

"Do you still not get it? You -- ignored Maria's guilt of betraying you and wanted her to continue staying in that house like nothing ever happened; because you never blamed her -- she doesn't want to blame herself; yet you never thought -- of the possibility that Maria's guilt has never completely disappeared, and some shreds of it still remains in her heart."

" ! ----?"

Basara then looked at Maria, shocked. And--

"……"

Maria silently lowered her eyes. That reaction and expression, revealed the truth to Basara.

Lucia the said to the speechless Basara:

"…Although she is very happy that she can still continue living together with you, but by staying beside you all every day, she is constantly reminded that she had betrayed her precious family; and whenever you said such warm yet cruel words like 『It's alright』 and smile, you deepen her pain. With that kind of pain, Maria had treated it as her punishment for betraying you all; yet this child continued to smile, making you all satisfied -- you all had never thought about what she was hiding under her smile."

Lucia then said with words filled with scorn:

"There is no grudges at all between you all? How laughable. Whenever Mio-sama and Yuki's curse of the Master-Servant Contract activates, you'll help them eradicate the guilt that had activated it in the first place, helping them to be lifted from the curse; I believe that kind of situations have already happened many times -- but, where is your care for Maria? Blindly giving kindness and goodwill, is sometimes more cruel than baring your fangs. You guys, hope to protect Maria -- with the actions you have made, do you really think it is really halping this child? What you have told me doesn't satisfy me at all, was it to only make yourselves happy?"

“No, we--!”

Basara wanted to retort, yet was unable to continue. Maria’s actions just now, had already shown who was right.

“--Since you claim that it’s not it, I’ll give you a chance to prove yourselves.

Lucia said:

“If Maria -- Naruse Maria is really your family, and you really want to stop me from using punishment to save her heart, then there is nothing to be said -- you have to punish Maria yourself, eradicate her pain, and prove that you’re not all bark and no bite.”

“I have to punish Maria…”

These provocative words caused Basara to look at Maria at a loss. Maria remained quiet, but--

“Maria…”

Toujou Basara saw Maria walk slowly towards him.

“……”

Maria kept quiet, only silently looked upwards at Basara.

Her eyes and expression, caused Basara to make a decision. Thus, Basara put both his hands on Maria’s shoulders, and turned to Lucia, quietly yet heavily saying:

“I promise -- if that will really save Maria, and make you acknowledge me as Maria’s family.

Part 8

In the traditions of succubi, the punishments handed down must not only include pain applied to the body, but also making the one being punished feel shame.

The older sister Lucia originally planned to use the whip she used as her weapon to punish Maria, thus she wanted to lend her whip to Basara for him to use. But he shook his head and rejected her, as if wanting to reassure her while his hands were on Maria's shoulders, and said:

"Since I am the one punishing Maria, I would like to do so with my own hands."

And after that, Basara explained that his punishment for Maria, would be slapping her butt.

Also known as spanking. Because it was the normal usual method of punishment utilised by Human parents. Right now--

"……"

In order to receive spanking, Naruse Maria was currently doing something while very red-faced.

And that is, taking off her clothes. Normally speaking, spanking didn't have the requirement of taking off one's clothes, but when Basara wanted to administer normal spanks, Lucia added on her request.

--Because she reckoned, that it wouldn't be embarrassing enough.

Lucia originally planned to not only use the whip on Maria, but to also strip off Maria's clothes one-by-one until she was naked, making her admit her wrongdoings while stark naked, to thoroughly wipe out her guilt and bad feelings.

Thus, that is why Maria is stripping off her clothes. If Basara wanted to create the effects of the whip cutting up Maria's clothes, he could just simple tear her clothes apart. But as Basara didn't want to do that, Lucia simply ordered Maria to first take off her clothes.

Not letting Basara take them off, but instead making Maria take them off herself. Because that is part is her punishment.

With only her panty left on, Maria then stood before Basara who waited for her while sitting on the sofa, meeting up with his eyes--

"I'm sorry, Basara. I…"

And apologised for hiding her true feelings. Basara stretched out his left hand, and said while caressing her cheeks:

"I see -- you have also been in so much pain."

"……I'm sorry."

Maria apologised once more--

"…--I understand. Right now, I will be punishing you."

Basara then said:

“However, that is not because you obeyed Zolgear and betrayed us, but because you still smiled despite the pain in your heart. Even if we are not related by blood, even if we are of different races, we are already family -- and I am your older brother. This may all be my wishful thinking, I that is what I believe. That’s why, if you as my little sister do something wrong, I will punish you…understand?”

“……Yes.”

Maria nodded, and Basara then turned to Lucia.

“Lucia, the magic that Maria had used before on Kurumi, the one that had a similar effect and similar method of lifting to the curse of the Master-Servant Contract made between me and both Mio and Yuki -- do you know how to use it too?”

“I do. Why do you ask?”

To Lucia’s question, Basara raised Maria’s right hand and said:

“I do know that I am about to punish her…to not let Maria conceal herself from us anymore, as well as to wipe out feelings like guilt from her heart. I would like to do things more thoroughly -- completely and thoroughly.”

“…If she were to enter an aroused state and experience pleasure and pain, wouldn’t it just nullify the purpose of the punishment?”

Basara replied to Lucia’s point raised:

“This kind of stuff, is according to the practices done in the past.”

Lucia looked silently at Basara for quite a while, and then replied:

"……I understand, I'll let Maria undergo my baptism, though this is very rarely done between succubi. My base succubus powers is stronger than Maria's, so there should be an effect."

And thus began slowly walking towards Maria.

"Maria… Look into my eyes."

"……Yes, Lucia-oneesama."

Even though she clearly understood what was coming from the conversation between the two, Maria obeyed her sister. After signs of succubus magic showed up within Lucia's eyes--

"Ah----…"

Looking directly into it -- a change then occurred within Maria's childish body. Somewhere within her lower abdomen, a sweet warmth came pouring out, and began to swell. Just as Lucia said, the older sister's powers was above Maria's, and the baptism was of course more powerful.

"Ah…Ah! …Aaaahhhh…!"

Beginning to gasp, Maria, collapsed into Basara's arms. While sitting on the sofa, Basara took the opportunity to place Maria on his thighs.

Her breasts on Basara's thighs, facing the side -- she was now in the position easiest for Basara to spank her butt. Then--

"--I'm beginning."

Basara's low voice sounded out.

“Fuahh… A,Ah…----!”

Spread on Basara’s thighs, gasping hotly while gulping--

“……Yes, Basara, please do… Please heavily punish the me who had deceived you all.”

Maria said such repenting words -- next moment, Basara’s palm landed on Maria’s rump, the slap sounding out in Lucia’s office.

The strong force hitting her paralysed her for a moment -- and then immediately came the scalding pain.

Having gone through a Hero’s training, Basara had slapped Maria’s butt without holding back -- twisting his wrist to its limit, his hand had followed the most optimal line to apply the perfect slap. Right from the start, the strength applied was beyond surprising.

The effects of the baptism didn’t soothe it at all, just like the panty she wore. Thus, Maria gave a scream with tearful eyes.

“ ! ! --Ffuuaaaaaaahhhhhhh♥”

A scream that Maria as a succubus was not expecting, an aroused scream that made weakened her. Her improper gasps, clearly entered Maria’s ears.

…W-Why did I…give such a…scream…?

Maria became shocked and dazed, but she was unable to continue thinking.

Because the second hit landed on her butt.

“Eek! Aaahhh-----♥”

That, undoubtedly, is purely pain only, with no sense of pleasure at all -- but yet, what escaped her mouth was a pleasured scream.

Her reactions and what she felt was clearly mismatched, pushing Maria's mind into a mess.

…Ah.

But she then quickly realised, the pain only existed on her butt -- under the surface, something began changing.

That bundle of warmth began to grow even faster. When the third hit landed--

"Ah～～～～～～～♥"

Naruse Maria finally understood.

Within her body, the pain and pleasure were intertwined together. Experiencing that scalding pain, even hotter pleasure came along with it.

Thus -- in the next instant, she was bathed in pain and pleasure.

With the fourth hit, the pain and pleasure were equal. The fifth hit brought her pain past her limits -- with the sixth hit, only pleasure was left in her mind. With that -- everything began running out of control.

"Haah! …Basara! Ah♥ fu… A-Ahhwoo♥ ooo! Ah--Aaahhhh♥"

With each loud hit Basara landed on Maria's butt, Maria's mind was pulled even deeper into the muddle. The bundle of hotness within her

began spreading from her butt and thighs. Each time the crisp sound resounded, Maria screamed with an intoxicated expression.

In the moment the tenth hit landed--

" ! ------ Haaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh～～～～♥ "

The accumulated pleasure suddenly exploded, and Naruse Maria was instantly pushed to the peak.

With her eyes white from the climax, that small childish body lay paralysed on Basara's thighs; the pleasuring aftertaste left her sluggish, gasping with pleasure. Suddenly, Basara had stopped spanking her butt -- and Maria indulged while immersed in her happiness and fulfilment. Seeing this--

"--You couldn't possibly be thinking, that that would be enough to settle things?"

Having watched the whole process up till now, Lucia said coldly.

"Do you really think with with only ten spanks…a single climax, would be enough to make this woman forget it all? If that is so, then you -- are looking down on a woman's and Maria's pain."

"……"

Basara's answered Lucia's disappointment with silence.

As if telling her, that it's not over yet.

"Ah… Aaoo… Basa-ra…?"

Maria turned to face him with her eyes wet from the pleasure, and realised the hand Basara spanked her with, had went under the band of her panties.

“Ah……”

Without any time to resist, Basara pulled off her panties to her knees. Her small round butts, its redness is now completely visible--

…My, goodness…

But it didn’t hurt at all. Probably because the waves of pleasure were washing over her then subsiding, Maria’s butts were moving about on Basara’s thighs, seeming to be very comfortable. Hence, Basara looked at her and said:

“…Maria.”

Raising his left hand, that palm then landed on her butt.

…Why…Why, am I so hot…

Maria has been forced to experience her butt being punished, and is experiencing pain -- as well as even stronger pleasure. What was transmitted from the palm, is burning pleasure, as if that hand is warmly scalding her.

“Ah--…”

Maria suddenly felt a sense of floating. Basara had lifted her body from under her, removing her panty that was at her knees, and placed her back on his thighs.

--However, not horizontally in a position where he could easily spank her butt this time.

It instead was a position where Maria was facing Basara, where she was straddling him and as if they were about to hug each other.

"……"

Maria understood that now, she has to look on at him while he administers the pleasure punishment to her naked butt, until all her pain disappears from her heart. Maria had no intention of resisting, because she didn't want to hide anything from Basara anymore.

Thus, she silently waited for Basara to make his move. Basara's right hand then smacked onto the butt that was usually covered by her panties, and in that moment--

" ! --Haaaaaaaahhhhhhh♥"

The first one sent Maria to the peak again -- and when the next one landed, Maria reached the peak once more while looking at Basara's face.

With every smack landing on her naked butt, each and every one was filled with the happiness from being spanked while sitting on his thighs -- with the pleasure acting as a catalyst for her overwhelming happiness. Very soon, Maria's young and tender body began showing signs of a women's fulfilment.

Even while receiving punishment, the tips of Maria's breasts were swollen and still, and from her mouth and between her legs flowed out Maria's ''love fluids''. Maria's small childish body was exploited

by Basara with every smack landing just like that, adding on to her hotness rapidly. Once the number passed ten, Maria finally reached her limit.

“ ! ～～～～～～～～～～～～～～～♥”

Naruse Maria’s hands and legs wrapped around Basara, and her whole body quivered.

“……! Shaaahh…! Aaaoo… Fu-aahh……♥”

She could no longer think, and to the Maria who could only manage to gasp for air--

“-------”

Basara raised his right hand. Seeing this--

“ ! --Basara!”

Lucia couldn’t help but to stop him from the side, but -- in the next moment, what Naruse Maria’s butt that had already reached its limit received, is pampering. Basara’s hand caressed Maria’s butt that had finished receiving its punishment as if to comfort it, no different from the patting of a child’s head to give praise.

“……It’s been hard on you.”

Basara’s tender voice came from her side. Thus--

“……..!”

Maria heavily nodded while many tears rolled from her large wet eyes.

And proceeded to hug Basara even tighter, calling his name once more.

After that--

“Is this punishment enough?”

“……”

At Basara’s question, Lucia wordlessly gave her affirmative. With that, Basara’s expression relaxed, and lightly caressed Maria’s hair.

--Maria has already fallen asleep on Basara’s thighs.

Lucia handed the anti-inflammatory ointment originally to be used after the whipping to Basara, who then immediately began to apply it to Maria’s butt gently. It was here where Maria had completely lost consciousness. [19]

Maria’s normal breathing, showed that she is all well and at peace.

…I see.

Lucia watched as Basara caressed Maria’s head with eyes filled with compassion, as then managed to finally somewhat understood why Sheera had taken a liking to Basara. Maria probably didn’t know as it was something from before her birth -- the baptism punishment Basara had requested, was Sheera’s customary trick.

Probably while talking to Basara, Sheera had realised that a part of his heart was similar to her’s. With someone like that accompanying Maria, Lucia felt reassured, yet at the same time slightly afraid.

--Basara is the son of the former Hero [God of War] Jin·Toujou, and just that alone will be enough to make one be on their guard alreadu. But compared with expression of love and affection before her eyes--

…Just what is with this youth, that can occasionally show cold eyes that can make even me shudder…

Who knows, hiding within Basara's heart might be an unimaginably cold emotion.

…Speaking of which.

Basara managed to do what he had said, to liberate the pain in Maria's heart. Despite seeing the heart of her cute little sister being saved by him, there were some bad feelings with her, but even if she managed to stem that fuzzy thought, she was still fearful of him, which just seems too exaggerated...

And right now, there is still something important to do -- thus Lucia began to take action.

"------"

Lucia turned to stare at her office door, and that wooden door suddenly began to open -- and the teenage girl behind the door trembled from the shock at the sudden change of events--

" ! --Ah… Ah…"

And fell and sat down on the ground. That was the female Hero who had came to the Demon Realm together with Basara--

"Kurumi…?"

Basara called out her name in shock, thinking about after Maria who was asleep on his thighs, he didn't stand up. Lucia began walking towards Kurumi in Basara's place, and then said while standing before her eyes:

"Not only did you move about in the city unauthorised, you also secretly listened in on my office… To think that a Hero would do such a unlawful act."

"I… I……"

Under Lucia's ruthless criticism, Kurumi panicked and looked towards Basara.

She probably came to look as Basara and Maria seemed to be taking a very long time -- and after hearing the various noises from just now from the office, she remained out here until now since it wasn't convenient for her to escape back to the room.

--Now, just how should she be handled?

She had not gone through the passage Sheera had constructed, as Lucia would notice it since it had already been used by Basara. With the Master-Servant Contract Basara had made with Mio and Yuki, they could sense his location; but Mio would be too conspicuous since she is the only daughter of the previous Demon Lord, and while Yuki could move about secretly, she could not conceal herself as well as Kurumi who could hide with the magics of her spirits, and thus that is probably why they had sent her. They were all worried about Basara and Maria and thus came to check, that thought was not too hard for him to understand.

…However.

Unfortunately, Lucia is not in a very good mood right now. That was only natural, at this time, the one to release Maria's pain and make her flighty and happy was originally supposed to be Lucia herself. While originally even thinking that Basara had no such skill, that very role was very abruptly taken away from her.

"Ah… Aahh…!"

"……"

Probably hearing Maria's sounds of fawning, Kurumi's body seems to have been infected and began to seem to feel pleasure and excitement, a dark pleasure starting to take over her heart.

Usually, as Ramusas's aide -- as well as managing many maidservants, Lucia had to exercise self-discipline and restrain her own desires; but in truth, her instincts as a succubus is much stronger than Maria's. And right now -- Lucia isn't that calm enough to be able to suppress her intense instincts.

--Thus, for all of Lucia's negative and bad feelings, she had decided to vent it all on the Kurumi before her eyes.

In other words, she let loose her succubus baptism. With effects even able to make Maria of the same race to lose strength in her legs, it enveloped the Kurumi who had her immunity lowered from being in the Demon Realm--

"Eh---- Ah……"

And caused her to collapse over with her eyes glazing over. Lucia took the opportunity to hold her in her arms, and then brought her into her own office.

“Lucia, why did you…!”

At the words Basara had at the assault before him--

“I’ve said it before. As the aide of Ramusas-sama, this place this my office.”

While holding Kurumi within her arms, Lucia walked towards Basara and answered:

“And this city, is the residence of the previous Demon Lord Wilbert-sama, and also for the current management of the Moderates Faction. She had not used Mother’s tunnel, which shows that she had moved within the city unauthorised to find this place -- and with that, you have no say in what I want to do.”

Lucia said so while looking at Basara, her succubus instincts blazing within her eyes, her body letting out an S-Class aura.

“ ! …Kurumi have not done the Master-Servant Contract with me, and even if the others did, they do not know the ways within the city; so it’s likely that just like me, it was Sheera who told her the way.”

Just now, Lucia seemed to relatively address her mother more respectfully, thus Basara wanted to try raising her name to calm Lucia down. However--

“No need to bring my mother’s name out… This place is my room, so the right to decide is all mine.”

After saying that, she laid down Kurumi on a sofa adjacent to the table adjacent to the sofa Basara was sitting on, and with neat and tidy actions, she began taking off Kurumi's clothes.

But Lucia's rationality just barely managed to not be overtaken by her succubus instincts, and so even if she lost her calm, she didn't forcefully rip apart Kurumi's clothes. In the blink of an eye, she had stripped Kurumi to her underwear, after undoing the clasps and removing her bra to reveal those luscious breasts, her hands moved towards her panty--

" ! --Kurumi is your little sister's rare close friend! If you harm her, Maria will most likely become sad, so please think it over!"

Hearing Basara saying that advice to try to get her to stop--

"------"

Lucia stopped her hands which had already hooked onto Kurumi's panty. She has her back facing Basara, so she was unable to see what expression he had on right now. However -- after a brief silence, Lucia straightened up and turned around--

"……Alright. For Maria's sake, I'll give you another chance."

And said while looking at Basara with her eyes raging with her succubus instincts:

"You shall take my place, give me a display with this girl, and satisfy my needs -- say if I am not satisfied, I will no longer care if she is Maria's friend, and administer true happiness devoting all my

succubus powers, making her forget even her own identity. Don't make me make any more allowances."

" ! ……I understand."

Basara helplessly promised. Although further persuasion or negotiation was not impossible, but if he were to fail and provoke Lucia, it'll be hard to say in what state Kurumi will end up in. Thus--

"……"

Basara lightly raised Maria and laid her on the sofa to continue sleeping, and then headed towards the sofa Kurumi and Lucia were at.

Part 9

Kurumi had a secret which no one else know.

That -- is a thought that has been hidden within her heart for a long time.

Just like Mio and Yuki, Kurumi also wanted to make the Master-Servant Contract with Basara.

…Because.

Kurumi realised -- unconsciously, a distance between her and the other already.

--Compared to the gap that existed between her and him back when the Spirit Lance Byakko user Hayase Takashi had fought one on one

with Basara while being supervised by Shiba Kyoichi, that gap back then was smaller than now.

The gap, does not refer to their battle potential, but instead her relationship with Basara.

In the past when she had first arrived at the Toujou Residences to assist Yuki, she discovered a tie connecting Basara to Mio, Yuki, and Maria which can never be told anyone, which had already greatly raised all of their battle potential.

That increase had gradually left Kurumi behind in the dust -- so naturally, Kurumi also wanted to make the Master-Servant Contract with Basara.

…However.

Regrettably, she cannot do so. With Jin's influence, Yuki has already gotten the elders' permission to continue staying by Basara's side, so she will probably not be leaving the Toujou Household; but for Kurumi, she must return to the [Village] immediately once an order come, without an option of rejecting it. Thus, if any weird demonic fluctuations were to be found hidden within her body, it'll bring trouble to her parents. With just Yuki's matter alone, the Nonaka household was already in a difficult position. Even if the other party is Basara, if the matter of Kurumi making a Master-Servant Contract of the Demons is to be exposed, the elders might even possibly make the decision to make Basara an elimination target; if it comes to that, then they won't send Takashi and [Byakko] to do it, but instead that Shiba

Kyoichi personally to do it. In any case, that must be avoided at all costs.

…Because there is no chance of winning any of that at all…

At their current level, they have no chance of winning against that monster at all… to the point where Jin would have to make a move himself<they would need him to stand a chance</ref>, but Jin has already left the frontlines long ago… [20] Thus, she must not let the elders send out Shiba Kyoichi.

And that, is the reason why Kurumi has always suppressed her desire for the Master-Servant Contract with Basara.

…But still, Kurumi still wanted to close the gap in her relationship with Basara.

In order to not be left behind, Kurumi had willingly let Maria do many embarrassing things to her. Even then, then bond connecting the girls to him was not only the Master-Servant Contract, but also the ties as comrades who survived death fights -- leading to Kurumi doing many low things together with everyone, but yet she still felt so far away from everyone else. Hence, in order to try to fill that hole, she would ask her spirits to use magic to make her have [A Certain Dream] while she slept.

That dream, is Nonaka Kurumi's heart's desire -- becoming Basara's lover.

--In the dream, the love between her and Basara deepened with each passing day.

The relationship between the two in that dream, was different from Maria's plots which had skipped past several sequences or stages -- it was through many dates, holding hands, embracing each other, that they became closer to each other.

In other words, Nonaka Kurumi's pure love.

About a week ago, Kurumi had finally kissed Basara in the dream. In reality, even though the two of them had done many lewd things, they had never kissed even once; so even if it was in a dream, Kurumi still became very happy to have caught up to the other girls. From then, Kurumi had then kissed with Basara no less than a thousand times within her dream. Though they had never kissed even once in real life, she had experienced kisses involving the tongue countless times within her dream, and even trying out some even bolder things.

…Heh heh.

The Kurumi who had always been manipulated by Basara and Maria in real life, was relatively bold in her dream.

As in reality doing that last final stage[21] would make her loose the spirits' protection, she still dared not do try it within her dream; rather, the pleasure, happiness and orgasms she enjoyed in her dreams were not from caressing each other. During that kiss with Basara, she had felt especially happy -- thus recently, she had taken the initiative in asking Basara for more.

--And right now, Nonaka is right within her dream.

What made her arrive at that conclusion, is the sense of floating that doesn't seemed real, as well as the sweet bitterness within her body.

Kurumi has only in her panty in that unfamiliar room, straddling Basara's thighs while he sat on a sofa caressing and kissing her; rubbing her breasts from her back, while he kissed her neck. She couldn't possibly do such a thing with Basara in an unfamiliar place in real life.

And that is why, this is undoubtedly a dream. *Now then, it'll be just a waste to be passive here, wouldn't?* Thinking that--

"Aaaahhhh… Basara♥"

Kurumi turned around while sitting on Basara's thighs, made contact with Basara's lips with her lips, going for a kiss, and--

"Chuooo… Aahh-hh…! Haahh…! Lyahh… Basara… Chiii."

Lewdly entangling their tongues, taking the initiative to ask Basara for more, had just made Basara show a surprised expression.

…Str…an…ge…?

Despite the fuzziness of her mind, Kurumi became slightly suspicious. In her dreams, her experiences with Basara were all linked up, to the Basara before her should be aware of her activeness. But just why -- harbouring some suspicions while in a deep kiss, did Kurumi hear the sound in the next moment, one was impossible in her dream.

" …----Kurumi?"

Basara's slightly puzzled voice. In the next moment--

"----!"

Kurumi became shocked. She did really just hear Basara's voice, but that should've been impossible. In order to keep separate her dreams from her reality -- no matter how great or happy the dreams were, she had never heard any voices.

"T-Then now…"

Kurumi scanned her surroundings, and realised that behind her -- Lucia was carrying a naked Maria and watching them while sitting on the sofa opposite to them. Unable to trick herself anymore, she now understood -- this is now undoubtedly, reality. Thus--

"N-No way… W-Why, am I…?"

Her debauchery [22] side, Lucia saw it -- no, the one she dreaded finding out the most is Basara, and it just had to be under these circumstances for her to have a kiss with Basara. Kurumi almost went insane from the embarrassment, and severely panicked.

" ! ----Kurumi, calm down."

Basara then said in a shockingly grave tone. That dangerous voice, caused Kurumi to freeze her thoughts, and look at him.

"I want to continue -- do you understand?"

With the abnormality of Lucia looking on from the side, Basara had said out words that would be impossible even within her dream, much less reality. That kiss that left no room for negotiation--

…Ah…

Made Kurumi remember -- no, understand, the situation where she had eavesdropped on Lucia's office after going to check on why Basara and Maria was taking so long…and what happened after that.

In other words, this situation was brought about by her herself. The reason for that, was likely due to Lucia's orders, so the reason Basara was obeying her is--

…She's threatening him with either me or Maria.

Theoretically, if there's no other way, Basara will most probably use his weapon, but now is not the most suitable time to do that. They had only just entered the Demon Realm and had accomplished nothing much -- they can't have a fallout with the Moderates Faction now, as they haven't done anything about Mio's situation.

It'll all just waste everyone's efforts in coming to the Demon Realm.

Although Lucia looking straight at her caused her a lot of embarrassment--

…But this is all my fault…

Not only did she not catch up to Basara and the rest, she was now pulling them down, at such an early time no less. With the regret and remorse surging within her--

"……..!"

Kurumi tightly closed her eyes -- but only for a short moment.

Since she had caused the disaster before her, what she has to do now, is now clear before her eyes.

In order to not pull everyone down -- she will redeem her wrong. Lucia is a succubus -- as well as Maria's sister, so what she would want would not be all too hard to guess. Then--

…Then let's just do it…!

Kurumi changed her thoughts again, and simply changed this scene with her mind into a dream -- this is no longer reality. With that, Lucia's gaze wouldn't be something to be mindful anymore. Thus--

"Ah, please… continue, Basara♥"

Saying that, Kurumi once again took the initiative and kissed Basara again. The second kiss -- this time, Basara did not become surprised anymore, immediately intertwined their tongues, letting out lewd sounds.

The intoxicating sounds which she would never hear in her dreams, intoxicated Kurumi even more.

All of her sensitive spots, were then caressed by Basara.

"aahh, haah… Don't♥Ahh… Ya-fuaaahhh, brother… Brother Basara~♥! Haah-ah… Don't… Don-haaahhhhh♥"

Breasts, hips, thighs -- all those areas tingled from the obscene caresses. Basara's hand had even slipped into her panty and began kneading her butt, giving her heaven. She then guided that hand in the panty to take it off her, hurriedly twisting her legs and hips, waiting for it to be slipped off her, to become fully naked.

And then once again kissed Basara, her lust heating her up.

“Please, brother Basara… Lick my armpits…”

Just then Kurumi pleaded Basara to attack her weak spot.

Basara instantly stopped sucking her breasts.

“……”

“……”

In the distance where their breaths were making contact, the two of them looked at each other for a moment which lasted for an eternity. After that, everything seemed to be in slow-motion.

Kurumi’s two hands crossed together behind her head.

Watching as Basara slowly brought his mouth to that particular spot.

She closed her eyes, and in the next moment--

“-------”

Nonaka Kurumi’s all shattered, her climax dominating over her, and then--

…*Ah*…

She used all her strength -- to fall into Basara’s arms.

Feeling his warmth, Kurumi’s consciousness suddenly began thinning.

But in the last moments--

『……』

Kurumi heard, Lucia’s voice coming from a distant place.

The reply Kurumi had anticipated from Lucia -- acknowledging her and Basara.

Hence Nonaka Kurumi closed her eyes, reassured.

Even if everything before her was pitch-black, she had no fear.

Because Basara’s warmth is protecting her.

Translator Notes and References

1. Jump up↑ shyly, embarrassed
2. Jump up↑ for their weapons, I think?
3. Jump up↑ formal and dignified
4. Jump up↑ [Chinese]The honorific used here: when translated literally, it would give [Mr Basara], but I left it out since it doesn't really fit
5. Jump up↑ Same as the above note about Mr.
6. Jump up↑ same and the above note
7. Jump up↑ same, last time I'll be doing this note in Lucia's speech
8. Jump up↑ Pun here: Jealousy
9. Jump up↑ describe or portray (something) precisely/indicate the exact position of (a border or boundary)
10. Jump up↑ honorific used here is to address someone younger, little brother is used here
11. Jump up↑ same as the note before, but little sister is the one used here
12. Jump up↑ honorific used here is to address an elder, e.g. miss
13. Jump up↑ a person sent as a diplomatic representative on a special mission

14. Jump up↑ calling her her own little sister here

15. Jump up↑ Seven deadly sins

16. Jump up↑ No, not the one where you can put stuff into. The one in a government

17. Jump up↑ persuade (an unwilling person) to do something by using force or threats

18. Jump up↑ far from the standards her mother is at

19. Jump up↑ Had fallen asleep, but **was** still aware of what's going on

20. Jump up↑ no longer at his prime anymore

21. Jump up↑ sex

22. Jump up↑ excessive indulgence in sex, alcohol, or drugs

Chapter 2 - Within Intertwining Thoughts

Part 1

After meting out pleasure as a punishment to Maria and Kurumi, Basara and Lucia returned to the room Mio and Yuki were waiting in together.

--Maria and Kurumi have been sent to another room, and will return to this room once they have gotten enough rest.

The intense climaxes have broken up Kurumi's consciousness, and it seems that the lingering aftertaste of the bliss Basara had given Maria were still intense. As the both of them hadn't made the Master-Servant Contract yet, both Mio and Yuki will likely activate the curse due to jealously if Maria and Kurumi were to be brought back to this room in their current states. Mio is the only daughter of the Demon Lord Wilbert, who is looked upon as a princess by the Moderates Faction; thus, things like subjugating Mio to deactivate the curse when they had just arrived here needs to be avoided.

…Also,

Since the Moderates were of course made up of Demons only, there must still be quite a number who still hates the Heroes, it wouldn't be safe to leave a defenceless Kurumi alone in a room. Additionally, though it's not something to be worried about – by taking care of Kurumi, Maria can also get rid of any potential thoughts of leaving them. Although he thought that what he had done just now was probably enough to make Maria realise how important she was to

him, she wouldn't have been in so much emotional pain if her regrets were so easy to be rid of, so this is some insurance. And right now—

"—I'm sorry, for coming back so late."

Basara said while opening the door. He saw Mio and Yuki having tea, and Zest went to wait by the wall when he entered the room.

However – likely because she had foreseen Lucia coming over to scold her for letting Basara use her spatial tunnel, Sheera is nowhere to be seen, but there is currently another person in the room. Probably here on Sheera's behalf, an old male demon with a long white beard was currently having tea with Mio and Yuki.

"------"

Lucia who had showed no reactions even when Basara had intruded in on her office, suddenly tensed up visibly when she saw that aged demon, and her expression slightly became solemn. Lucia's nervous reaction--

…Who is that?

--made Basara understand that the person was definitely not someone normal. Although he was happily speaking with Mio and Yuki, that's likely because of them being on guard.

"Ah, Basara… --Welcome back."

Seeing that Basara have returned, Mio became at ease; but once she realised the one behind him was Lucia and not Maria or Kurumi, she raised an eyebrow, like Yuki.

“Basara… Why is Maria not back with you?” “Didn’t Kurumi go after you?”

Basara went towards them, and answered

“They’re fine. Maria’s problem has been resolved, and she will be back a while later.”

“Resolved… Are you sure?”

Mio glanced at Lucia, and returned her sights back to Basara, and he nodded with a [Yes].

“I see… That’s great.”

Mio patted her chest and sighed in relief, and Yuki too became relieved and said no more. Thus – it was Basara’s turn to ask questions. Standing beside the table, he asked:

“Excuse me, may—“

I know who are you? But without a chance to finish his question, the answer came from his side.

“—Klaus-sama, why are you here?”

Lucia asked with a tone much colder than Basara’s, to which the one known as Klaus smiled and replied:

“Oh ho, Lucia-dono… Why do you seem so surprised? Is something wrong?”

“Don’t mind it, this is just a coincidence. I had heard that someone had seen Maria in the city, so I came here to take a look. Although age

has already began creeping up on me, it seems that my intuition is still in good order. Speaking of which, Lucia-dono doesn't seem to be really sincere; Mio-sama has come to visit the Demon Realm, but yet you didn't notify me?"

"…Ramusas-sama ordered me to keep it a secret before he returns."

"I see… It really does seem to be something that he would say."

Smiling, Klaus's line of sight then shifted from Lucia to Basara--

"So you are Basara-dono… that Jin·Toujou's son?"

And he stretched out his hand towards him, offering a handshake.

"I apologize for introducing myself this late -- this old man is known as Klaus, nice to meet you."

"Nice to meet you too… I am Toujou Basara."

Seeing Basara return his handshake, Klaus's smile widened.

"Mnn… you really do look like *him*."

"You know my dad?"

Deducing from his demeanour and Lucia's reactions and wordings, Klaus seems to hold a relatively high position within the Moderates Faction. For someone like him to have met Jin before, Basara was somewhat surprised.

"Not really… It's just that in the Great War, I've only caught some glimpses of Jin. Ara, back then, your father was someone who gave us lots of headaches. The man known as the [God of War] back in those

days, for his son to visit our city as a guest… I guess times must've changed a lot…"

Hearing Klaus say with a faraway look in his eyes, Yuki said with a low voice:

"Basara… He seems to have been Wilbert's adviser in the past."

Wilbert's adviser -- the one known as 『Virtuous Elder』?"

"Please, you're flattering me. This old man is as you see right now, only just a plain old man. As I am relatively older than the others, I just give some of my humble opinion whenever someone comes to me asking for advice."

Klaus modestly replied with a slight giggle.

…Although I do know that he holds a pretty high position, I was not expecting for him to be one of Wilbert's advisors.

Since that is the case, it's easy to imagine just how much weight his word carries in the Moderates Faction.

And from his attitude when speaking to Lucia--

…He probably one of those hoping for Mio to succeed Wilbert and become the new Demon Lord.

Ramusas wants to extract Wilbert's power within Mio's body -- while Klaus's standpoint on the issue was the exact opposite. With that, as someone serving under Ramusas, Lucia's tenseness when speaking to Klaus is understandable. Just then--

“Speaking of which, why did you take our guests to a room used by our maidservants…? In such a shabby room, how do you expect for them to get proper rest?”

Clapping his hands after saying that, a few maidservants then entered the room.

“This old man has prepared a better room for our guests. Since Basara-dono and also returned, shall we go over now?”

With that, maidservants began moving their luggage. The colour of their attire were different from Lucia’s and Zest’s, which showed that they were indeed maidservants serving under Klaus. Seeing this, Lucia hurriedly said attempting to stop him:

“Klaus-sama, please hold on. It is Ramusas-sama’s will for them to stay in this room, if you act like that, I will be unable to—“

“--What are you talking about? When Ramusas-sama returns later, this old man here will report to him about it personally. Since city is so big – there should be plenty of unused rooms much more suitable for Wilbert-heika[1]’s sole daughter Mio-sama, is there not?”

Though her protest had been cut off mid-way, Lucia still stood firm.

“That is your decision alone, and that is completely unrelated to me. Providing reception to Mio-sama and the others is my responsibility.”

“Then the decision to allocate for them to use this room, was it Ramusas-sama own decision?”

Similarly, Klaus too refused to back down.

“You’ve already gotten the honour of welcoming Mio-sama, so at least please leave their residences for the next few days to this old man. No need to worry, since everyone in this city already knows that this old man will never back down once he has decided on something, no matter who it may go against; so even if you fail to dissuade me, Ramusas-sama will not blame for neglect of duty.”

“Klaus-sama…!”

With unspeakable anxiety, Lucia still continued opposing.

“Lucia-dono… What else do you still want nag at this old man about?”

“……!”

Those words silenced Lucia. Although she might very well be the aide of the Moderates Faction’s current leader Ramusas, that does not mean that she is the second in rank in the Moderates Faction; but instead, that old man before her is the one who had that very position instead.

Unable to stop him – having lost the initiative, Lucia could only just stand there, appalled and stunned.

“It seems that you now understand. As for Maria-dono and Yuki-dono’s sister who are currently resting in another room, I will be dispatching someone to bring them over later – with that, I’ll be taking my leave now.”

After saying so with a smile, Klaus then left with Mio and the others who had a somewhat awkward expression on their faces.

Standing by the wall, Zest became unsure of what to do, but—

"—you'll go over with them. The one who ordered you to look after Basara-dono is Mother, so Klaus-sama wouldn't make things difficult for you and Mother."

"……Yes."

Hearing Lucia's words, Zest gave a slight nod before following after Basara's footsteps.

And with that – only Lucia was left in that room.

Part 2

"My, I apologise for letting everyone experience that—"

Led by Klaus, he said to Basara and the rest.

"His majesty Wilbert had passed away not many years ago, so not many people are really sure about whose name to call after 'His Majesty'[2]… this is just too embarrassing."

"May I ask… what kind of person was Wilbert-san?"

Basara asked. The information that Basara and Yuki knew were all from the mouths of the people in the [Village] who had taken part in the Great War. Wilbert had possessed the power to hold the Moderates Faction together and unite the whole of Demon Realm for a period of time, but yet he had chosen to withdraw his troops from the Human Realm and live a peaceful life in the Demon Realm, and had been called the strongest Demon Lord in history.

However, even with the narratives from those people, that was no different from the lives of a noble person in a normal history textbook in the Human Realm; even after going into more details, all that would be known is their ranks and achievements – what kind of person the person in question were, will never be known. Hearing that question—

"—he was someone more valiant than anyone, yet more tender than anyone."

Klaus answered while looking off at a faraway place in the air.

"In the past when majority of the Demon Realm were completely fixated on getting revenge against the Gods who had exiled the Demons, your Human Realm became a good stronghold for our militancy for us to invade into the God Realm – until the point of time his majesty Wilbert appeared, where the situation changed."

Because—

"He was a great negotiator who always thought about the weak and possessed an incomparable power, and he called for no more war and for peace… To not be bound anymore by our past shackles, to not seek revenge for our ancestors who were treated unfairly and with injustice, and to live for our present and our future and start creating happy days for all of us. Wilbert-sama's will deeply moved us, giving a great shock to all of our hearts. Gradually, we supported him, and the number of people doing so increased – and in the blink of an eye, our Moderates Faction led by Wilbert-sama, successfully became the largest force in the Demon Realm."

After that—

"His majesty announced the withdrawal of our troops in the Great War – so far, we were all just one step away from realising his majesty's dream. Originally, our very first period of peace with no fighting at all was supposed to follow immediately after in the Demon Realm – however, fate is just too cruel."

At that point, Klaus sighed before continuing:

"One day – Wilbert-sama came down with a serious illness."

"…Serious illness?"

Basara asked.

"That's right… Right to the end, all of us never found out just what illness that was, much less what caused it. It had slowly drained the Wilbert-sama who was known as the strongest Demon Lord of his power slowly day by day… up to the very last moment he drew his final breath. Following the time flow of your world, it would have happened approximately one and a half years ago.

"……"

Klaus's words, caused Mio's expression to become sombre while she walked beside Basara. Learning about the cause of her father's death – and knowing that Wilbert transferred his power to Mio while he was at death's doorstep had indirectly caused the parents who had raised her to die before her eyes, the two emotions – sadness and sorrow, as well as countless other emotions, must now be swirling within her heart, Hence—

"------"

Without stopping or slowing down at all, Basara grasped Mio's shoulders. As if to tell her, even if her blood or adoptive parents are no longer alive – her older brother is still right here by her side.

"…Mnn."

Seemingly having understood Basara's intentions, Mio then slightly leaned against Basara after letting out a small sound. Although it appears that Klaus had noticed their movements, he seemed to ignore it and didn't turn to look back, and said:

"After Wilbert-sama passed on, both the Radical and Conservative Factions joined hands and crowned that young man known as Leohart as the new Demon Lord, while Wilbert-sama's brother Ramusas-dono took up the responsibility of leading the Moderates Faction. However, we had never known that Wilbert-sama ever had a brother until that day, but since that Ramusas-sama is a very daunting figure…"

Klaus let out a sigh—

"He had suddenly appeared in the city, most probably after finding out that Wilbert-sama became confined to bed with an illness. While that was still fine, the problem was that no one knew just what Wilbert-sama was even thinking, suddenly appointing that brother of his to take over the leadership of the Moderates Faction in his last words… and that Ramusas-dono had done just that; yet he had shown not a shred of grieve at the passing of his younger brother, and while repeatedly disregarding our protests, he had made decisions and orders which pained us, putting to waste Wilbert-sama's kind

thoughts and intentions for Mio-sama whom he had loved just as much as the Demon Realm. Many of the Moderates Faction who had found our calling thanks to his majesty's way of thought, have been unable to accept Ramusas-dono's personality and already left the Moderates Faction… We, who were once the largest power in the Demon Realm, have now been reduced to this current state."

He spoke of the state of affairs after Wilbert's death with a regretful expression.

"Lucia-dono, too, had also admired his majesty Wilbert… But ever since she became Ramusas-dono's aide, she only follows his orders obediently."

While leading them through a grand gallery three-stories high, Klaus continued:

"However -- for most of us, our loyalty towards his majesty has not reduced one bit over these years."

As Basara, Mio, and Yuki stopped admist following Klaus--

『ーーーー！』

They drew a breath simultaneously, for they noticed a large group of people looking towards them. From maidservants, clerics, and servants who cooked and cleaned, to soldiers donning a sword -- their numbers exceeded into the hundreds.

They shouted at the shocking sudden appearance of Mio and the others:

『——Mio-sama, welcome！』

Voices overflowing with passion overlapped each other, making the air itself in this atrium shake.

“Eh… This…”

Seeing Mio becoming flustered at the grand welcoming, Klaus smiled and said to her:

“Mio-sama… would sending them a simple greeting be fine with you? They’ve been waiting here for a very long time for his majesty Wilbert’s daughter to appear.”

“Greeting..? How should I go about doing that…”

Seeing Mio sending him a plea with her eyes, Basara reluctantly nodded and said:

“Don’t think about it too much, Klaus-san said a simple greeting would be enough, so giving them a wave should be fine?”

“Yes, that’ll be good.”

Klaus smiled and nodded, and Mio then walked towards a spot where the people on the floor below can see her.

“Um… Like this?”

She then lightly raised her hand -- and the masses returned a large reaction, with happiness as if eagerly awaiting the arrival of the new monarch. Amongst it--

…Hmm?

Basara noticed that the sights of some of the people weren't focused on Mio alone. Following their gazes--

『ーーーーーー』

He immediately understood what they were looking at, and slightly widened his eyes. On the wall of the atrium -- behind Mio, near the top of the wall, a gigantic portraiture hung there.

The one depicted was a male demon with the same hair colour as Mio -- no mistaking it, it was a portrait of Wilbert.

From the viewpoint of the ones below, it was as if like Mio is carrying on Wilbert's legacy, with Wilbert watching over his own daughter.

"…Basara, is this really fine?"

Yuki had noticed it too, and asked at a volume where only Basara could hear. What Yuki was worried about, was those people below having hopes that Mio would become the new Demon Lord. Mio herself wanted to be rid of any and all fights amongst the demons over her and live peacefully in the Human Realm; since has no intention of becoming the Demon Lord at all, she should try to not do anything that would give people any ideas. And yet--

"Can't be helped… Since the stage has already been prepared to this extent, we'll just cause unnecessary conflicts if we don't go along with it."

With a solemn face, Basara took a glance at Klaus. The old demon who had probably arranged this performance, was gazing warmly at Mio.

Using subordinates to have Mio lower her emotional defences, and using the pressure from the masses to make Mio feel that [I have a duty to fulfil as the Demon Lord] -- as expected from Klaus, that wily old fox.

Perhaps he had already prepared all of this long ago. Who knows, with the excuse [a more suitable room has been prepared] to forcibly dissuade Lucia and then leaving that room, was all part of that plan.

…However.

From the night Lucia had arrived at the Toujou Residences with the invitation from the Demon Realm, already more than one month already passed.

This side was already more than naturally and thoroughly prepared. How this side would move and what type of tricks they would play -- Basara had thought up of some possibilities and countermeasures, so the current situation was still within his expectations. Of course, how the situation will develop may not go as expected--

…No matter what, avoiding being led around by the nose by them is a must.

This place is the Demon Realm, as well as the Moderates Faction's stronghold. They have the home field advantage.

--But still, Toujou Basara told himself.

For obtaining the future Mio and us all want,

For going back to the Human Realm -- and living our lives together, the gambit must be played.

Part 3

After having that sudden audience before her,

The new guest room they were brought to, was a luxurious suite that was worlds apart from the previous room.

Furniture, carpets, wallpaper, ceiling, no matter what it was, all of them had an incredible amount of details and felt extremely luxurious; an even larger area, and an even higher ceiling, all of the differences in the two rooms further amplified the differences felt in the spaciousness between the two places.

Just how big was the place? Six bedrooms, three living rooms, three dining rooms, and many bathrooms everywhere.

Although it was already obvious that the treatment from Klaus's camp who wanted Mio to become the new Demon Lord was different from Wilbert and Lucia who wanted to extract Wilbert's power from Mio, there were uneasiness over being welcomed to live in such a grand and magnificent Suite. However, even after asking for a more normal room from Klaus, that unmovable old demon only answered: [Don't worry, you'll get used to it immediately]. Laughing it off, he declined in a roundabout way.

Following Japan's flow of time, the time right now was a little before dawn; but as they had already enquired Maria about the differences between the two Realms, they've already adjusted their body clocks[3], so right now they don't feel tired.

Hence -- one hour after moving into the new guest room, Naruse Mio was now amongst some hustle and bustle.

As there is still some time before dinner, Mio had accepted Klaus's suggestion and went into the city with Basara and Yuki to tour around. Other than maid Zest who was to serve Basara, there was someone else who came with them.

"--and right now, we have come to Aderbell Plaza!"

The young lady with a maid uniform said with her arms wide open with a big smile. Her name is Noel, the guide Klaus had sent to Mio and the others. As she had been very lively during her self-introduction with no fear and shyness towards Mio as Wilbert's sole daughter, the two of the soon got along with each other pretty well.

A fountain and a stature of Wilbert was in the center of Arderbell Plaza, and with it being well accessible from many places, it is a hub where many people passes through.

The plaza was packed with many people, with many vendors and open-air shops attracting many customers -- just like downtown areas of Tokyo.

--However, this downtown area is still different from the ones in the Human Realm.

Firstly, the Moderates Faction and the Current Demon Lord Faction are in a war, and this town is no exception.

Many soldiers can be seen within the plaza, the sword hanging at their waists and their armour confirmed their preparations for war.

Secondly, it was something that is obvious -- everyone here is a demon. However, none of them have yet to notice that Basara and the other humans have been mixed into the crowd. The reason for that is in their clothings.

"…We really weren't found out."

"That's right, just as I had said. Feeling more at ease now?"

Noel giggled while giving a reply to Mio. Mio, Basara and Yuki had indeed gone through a transformation, but all that could really be changed was really their clothing. Basara had changed into a cleric's clothing, and Mio and Yuki had changed into a maid's clothing. That was all that is to their disguises. But yet the reason their cover have not been blown yet was--

"Demons that look completely different from us… there's so many of them."

Before Mio's eyes -- amongst the bustling demons, majority of them are like a human. Of course, some of them are zoomorphic while some are completely different from a human; but most of them are very like of a human, to the extent where they seem no different from a real human.

And one of them would be Noel; though her outer appearance is exactly the same as a human, it is the truth that she is a demon, and there isn't any surprise from anyone at all when she came to this place. Thus, absolutely no suspicions would be raised at all even if Mio and the others came to this place, since they appear to be of the same race as Noel.

“There’s nothing unexpected about this at all. Our ancestors of the Demon Race were originally exiled from the God Realm… and since the Human Race were created with appearances similar to that of Gods, it’s mostly a given that we’ll look very alike.”

It has been said that amongst the Demon Race, there were many in the Medieval Times [4] who accepted hybridization and had left behind their future generations; amongst the ones remaining in the Human Realm, were the Vampires and Sprites[5].

Relatively, some of them had chosen to bring their children back to the Demon Realm. Due to these children not being thoroughbred, they were often discriminated against -- and the Moderates Faction that Wilbert led became a haven for them. Very quickly, Vereda City filled with these demons who were half-human, and marriages amongst them happened often. With each generation, the number of demons who did not look like a human anymore soon increased.

「Speaking of which--」 Noel smiled and said:

Although Mio-sama has Wilbert-sama’s bloodline, you look exactly just like a human.”

“……..You’re right. Nn, right..."

When Noel asked that question, Naruse Mio remembered again… the fact and reality that she was not just a normal Human.

Rather than saying that this didn’t feel real to her or that she lacks consciousness about the situation… might as well say that she deliberately tries to not think about it. Even if she had been forced to

see the ones she had been forced to believe as her parents die before her and had learnt the fact that she is the Previous Demon Lord's daughter--

…however,

Despite having her normal daily life vanishing without a trace from the day the parents that raised her died – stemming from the dribs and drabs in the daily life with her adoptive parents, Naruse Mio still sees herself as a human. Although those precious days are never coming back, those little things are all's left that's precious to her.

And now, she had once again received another precious thing; Basara completely sees Mio as a human, and Maria isn't forcing her to have the consciousness as one of the Demon Race; Yuki and Kurumi doesn't regard her as an enemy, and she has friends like Aikawa and Sakaki in school. Living normal daily life with them all, is now what is most precious of all to Mio.

…That's right.

I must not lose the precious daily life that I have, that is the very reason that I have come to the Demon Realm for.

I want to live as a Human, with Basara – as Naruse Mio.

With Noel at the lead, a line followed her towards the east, coming to a corner where shops have gathered.

「……」

Nonaka Yuki silently maintained her viligance towards their surroundings.

--She had originally chosen to remain within the castle together with Kurumi and Maria, but this would mean that Basara and Mio would be out alone. This place is the Demon Realm, and those of the Demon Race are everywhere; even if Noel and Klaus have no problems with it at all, there would be a great disturbance once Basara's real identity was uncovered that might very well put their lives in danger, so the more battle prowess present, the better it would be.

…But.

In the Demon Realm that is thickly laden with demonic power, not even half of 「Sakuya」's power could be used, with the upper limit being just like in Zolgear's Mansion and possibly less.

Basara uses the demonic sword Brynhildr, Mio has demon blood, and Zest is a demon; and with Noel who was sent by Klaus to guide them around, they probably should have enough power. With all these, the person who would most likely drag everyone down is Yuki.

However, even if Zest and Noel are able to fight, they might not be reliable – as long as it remained unconfirmed if they will help our side, it would be for the best if Yuki came along with them – that was the decision they reached after she had discussed with Basara and Mio.

…*Also,* leaving Mio alone with Basara is *dangerous*.

That is mainly due to another different reason. If say, after they had left and if Mio's face were to suddenly turn red for an unknown reason, or if the buttons on her maid attire were not done properly, or if her underwear were to mysteriously go missing, or the likes of it, she would never be able to accept what would happen after that.

Although since Zest and Noel were also present and thus there isn't a need to be too much worried about *that* happening, people must learn to expect the unexpected, so keeping an eye on them would be for the best. And thus Yuki had resolved herself, and kept up her vigilance, not letting up even once. In the end, Noel who was at the lead now turned around and said:

"…Um, Yuki-dono？"

"What is it?"

"You are a Hero, so I guess it's normal for you to be somewhat nervous… but if you remain this tense, you'll easily attract attention. Please do try to have a smile on, have that smile remain there."

"……I understand …Hehehe."

"What the use if you just say it out!？ What's with your expressionless face, there's not a shred of emotion at all!"

"However, Yuki… Noel's right, you'll be conspicuous if you're too nervous, so do try to relax more."

"……I'm sorry."

"No need to apologise… With you here, we can put ourselves more at ease."

Saying that, Basara brought his hand onto Yuki's head. Basara's warm smile and care, moved Yuki into moving along with his hands—

"Basara--…" "—stop right there."

The moment she saw Yuki moving even closer towards Basara, Mio immediately pushed herself towards Basara, not intending to let Yuki have a head start.

"You… Why are you trying to put on a kissing show here in the middle of the road?"

"……Tch."

"[Tch] your head! Don't get ahead of yourself!"

Mio grabbed Basara's hand and pulled him away from Yuki.

"E-Everyone, please look this way~!"

From the side-lines, Noel at this moment raised her hand and said:

"The flower shop over there is pretty famous within Vereda City, and many of the flowers and plants in the city come from here!"

Probably worried that they'll attract unwanted attention if the argument went on, she moved her raised hand and pointed in a certain direction, at a flower shop.

"Oh—it's pretty unexpected that the royal palace would utilise the services of a flower shop on the streets."

"Yes… The reason is that, the boss of that shop are on good terms with his majesty Wilbert."

Hearing Basara's curiosity, Noel gave her confirmation and gave a relaxed sigh after confirming the topic has been changed. Just then—

"Mn? Aren't you Noel? Did you sneak out of the palace again to buy snacks again?"

A male whose burliness was completely disproportionate to the flower shop walked out. Those words seemed to have earned dissatisfaction from Noel, who then said while pouting resentfully:

"No way! I came out today together with new people to have them become familiar with the place!"

"I see, those few do indeed look unfamiliar… It is pretty unexpected that even you have begun to look after new people, so it seems that the problem of the short handedness in the palace have become this serious…"

The male boss said while observing Basara and the others.

"P-Please mind your manners, florist-san… Do you want me to complain to the one responsible for bringing in your stock and bring down your partnership?! If you want to apologise, do it now, Ortega-san!"

"Ha… Do you even have the power to do that?"

"There wasn't a need to ridicule me like that, was there?! I'm speaking for real!"

"Hmph."

After giving that reply to the raging Noel, the man called Ortega looked at Mio and said:

"Speaking of which – the young lady here, is Wilbert's daughter, right?"

"—so after Wilbert had spent so much effort just to send her to the Human Realm, now those idiots call her back?"

Ortega's words brought about a sudden breathless nervousness, instantly freezing the atmosphere.

…W-Why?

Mio began panicking. So, other than Ramusas who wanted to extract Wilbert's power from her and Klaus who wanted Mio to be the new Demon Lord, there were people like Ortega who had opinions similar to her, wishing for her to remain herself? Although that is already surprising to her by itself – that is not the problem here. In order to prevent a commotion, the news of her coming to the Demon Realm was not supposed to be revealed to the public.

So where did he get that information from? Basara and Yuki immediately took action, standing in between Ortega and Mio from the left and right, separating the two of them.

"—how did you know that. From what Noel had said, you are someone who has opportunities to exit the city, right?"

Basara asked with an aggressive tint in his eye, and Ortega impatiently scratched the back of his head and replied:

“Stop being so aggressive with this old flower shop man, little brat – don’t worry, I didn’t hear that piece of information from anyone else.”

“…So how did you know that?”

Ortega narrowed his eyes at Mio and said:

“I see, you probably don’t know how she looked like… You look a lot like Ashe-san.”

“Ashe… do you mean my mother?”

“Yes. Not only do you look like her, your eye colour is the same as her’s.”

Mio had always thought the ones who raised her were her biological parents, and as those memories were too overpowering, she never really thought about her biological parents, and only learnt their names, so—

“……She had died not long after giving birth to me, right?”

To Mio who said in a low voice, Ortega nodded.

“I see, so you already know it?”

“Yes, Maria – the girl who came to protect me told me about that too when she told me of my real identity.”

“……..” “……”

Listening from the sides, Basara and Yuki who already know about it remained silent; but that silence was different from the silence from before – it was of worry for Mio. As that caused Mio to feel thankful –

…My biological mother…

To date, she had learnt that her parents were her adoptive parents, and that her biological father was the Demon Lord—

She had learnt about that from Maria after her adoptive parents had been killed by Zolgear and after she had escaped the danger. Amongst the questions she had raised to Maria back then, naturally of course included her biological mother.

And what she learnt was that, it wasn't just her biological father Wilbert who had died, her mother had died even earlier – not long after giving birth to Mio.

"—but boss[6], why do you know so much about Ashe-denka's[7] appearance?"

Having remained silent up till now, Zest suddenly asked.

"Although Ashe-denka is part of the Demon's lineage, I had heard that she had grown up in the Demon Realm, and the Human's blood within her is strong; Mio-sama's appearance is like a Human's, probably inherited from her mother. Ashe-denka had fallen in love after knowing his majesty Wilbert and became pregnant with Mio-sama, and soon took up residence in this Realm."

But—

"Reportedly, his majesty Wilbert is a pure-blooded high-class Demon, and is too far apart from the Ashe-denka whose demon blood is thin and had grown up in the Human Realm, so of course there were many who opposed their marriage. In order to let the Radical or

Conservative Factions find any excuses for trouble, she had to live in seclusion in the city's solitary tower – not only even a single portrait or even a single photo of her was allowed to exist, even the number of people who knew of her existence was few – so, just who do you even know how she looked?"

"--exactly because she lived that sort of life."

To Zest's question, Ortega lowered his voice—

"No matter how much Wilbert gave his time to interact with her, her life in the tower was no different from being under house arrest. To her, these flowers I that delivered to her are probably the only times she can get some happiness… so she requested through Wilbert for me to teach her how to nurture or look after beautiful flowers, and so I then often went to that place."

And said while looking at a faraway place in the sky:

"She was such a good girl… She had no qualms at all even though she had totally no freedom, always smiling more radiantly than the flowers I had meticulously cared for; even if those around her gave no blessings, as long as she can be with Wilbert, be by his side, bear his child – in other words, you, she will be completely happy and satisfied."

"……I…….see."

As to being the Demon Lord's daughter, it all still felt surreal to Naruse Mio. That's why, when the city's maids and soldiers gave their welcome to her, she didn't know how to react.

—and she thought that this all was not too bad, at all.

Because there wasn't a need to change her thoughts. Because her biological father as the Demon Lord had transferred his power to Mio, Mio had become a target to be fought over and had resulted in her adoptive parent's deaths; although Zolgear who had taken away Mio's peaceful everyday life wasn't free from blame, Wilbert too held some blame, but it's useless blaming someone dead. The stud with him and his wife, caused no emotions in Mio at all. To get revenge for her adoptive parents – that was Mio's all before she met Basara; then again, the reason she had come to the Demon Realm was to solve the problems revolving around Wilbert's power within her. Thus, even after hearing the story about her biological mother, she felt no special emotions at all, yet she still—

"……Thank you for telling me about my mother."

"Although you do not know how your mother looked like at all, does knowing that you look a lot like you mother bring you some happiness?"

Ortega's question, caused Mio to smile bitterly and reply:

"As to whether I'm happy or not, even I am not clear about that…… Since after all, I know completely nothing about my biological mother except her name – at least, I feel that it's a good thing to know more about her."

Hearing Mio's thought, Ortega gave a deep sigh while saying: [I see]. Just then—

“Umm, Ortega-san, please let the news about Mio-sama remain a secret, ok?”

Noel who had lagged behind the discussion interrupted and said:

“If people were to find out that the information leak was from you and me bringing Mio-sama here were to be revealed, experiencing a death would be a given, if I were to say it.”

Ortega gave a [Hmph!]—

“No need to worry, quickly be on your way – staying any longer will be getting in the way of my business[8].

Turning around after saying that, he then disappeared into his shop.

Part 4

Now – after Noel had already brought them around the market once,

“—alright, last up, we absolutely have to drink tea from this shop before we can consider this complete!”

She once again came back to Aderbell Plaza and stopped before a café. At this place, one can enjoy the plaza’s open-air observatory, a favourite of the young and old, it was a shop which had many customers. While Basara and the others were queuing up behind Noel and other customers, Zest glanced through the inside of the shop.

“? What’s the matter, Zest?”

“…Basara-sama, please enjoy the café, I’ll wait here outside.”

After bowing to Basara and the rest, Zest turned around and left the café.

And then she headed towards the dark alley behind the café.

…this place should probably be safe.

There were a few people in that shop, and it would be best if Zest were to avoid having contact with them. Right now she was not alone, Basara and the rest were also present, so she can't let her own problems cause disruption to them. After coming to a place where there was no one, Zest released a sigh and leaned her back against the shop's wall. Just then—

『…….』

Something appeared before Zest from within the alley's darkness. Possessing long ears, looks very similar to a cat, but has something growing out on its forehead – a unicorn pup.

It had no collar, and it doesn't seem to be someone's pet; it hadn't come into the city to forage for food, but instead it was chased in here – no matter what it was, it probably shouldn't be able to survive in this place.

『-------』

The little unicorn raised its head to look at Zest, and ran towards her feet to sniff at her shoes. Seeing how it interacted with a stranger—

"This isn't a place someone like you should be at… but I suppose you have no other places to go."

Zest slightly bent down and caressed its small head. The little unicorn also narrowed its eyes, and began playing with her hand. Seeing this, Zest couldn't help but to think – this child is just like me.

--Even though the power Zolgear held within the Council was the lowest, he was still one of the unified rulers of the Current Demon Lord Faction.

Zest had been created to be his subordinate, and lived a subordinate's life; when she was almost killed by her master Zolgear, the one who saved her was the enemy Basara.

Not only had Basara saved her life, he helped the her who had nowhere to go to look for the optimal solution, negotiating with the Moderates Faction and giving her safe place to stay; Sheera who had voluntarily looked after her also treated her well.

The number of things Zest was thankful to Basara for were numerous.

…However.

She would occasionally think – ''am I really allowed to remain here?''

But that thought remained a thought. Right now, she had nowhere else to go.

…No.

To tell the truth, there is still someone she could still rely on, only that she chose not to. Hence—

"……Basara-sama."

Zest said out loud his name quietly.

--Since taking refuge in the Moderates Faction, there was never a day where she stopped thinking about him.

Not only just that, thoughts like [I want to be by his side] and [I want to serve him] within her increased day by day. On the day the messenger from the Moderates Faction came to the Toujou Residence, Basara had told her that she was welcome any time to come back if anything happened, but she was unable to do that.

…Since,

If she were to go to the Toujou Residences for real and got rejected, not being allowed to be by his side – she would truly have nowhere to go.

--So when Sheera let Zest be in charge of looking after Basara, she was truly happy.

Being able to see him again, hear him call her name again, tears had almost welled up in her eyes.

…Even then,

Zest cannot be by his side, since Basara thinks that Zest should remain in the Moderates Faction; when he interacted with either Mio, Yuki, Maria or Kurumi, the caring eyes that he would show them would most likely never be shown to her.

「……Even then, I still--」

Zest squatted down, and the little unicorn licked her hand, as if worrying about her.

After remaining in this posture for a while—

"—Oioioi, what are you doing here?"

A rough voice shouting came from the alleyway connecting to the Main Street. When Zest raised her head to look, she saw the ones standing there are the ones from the café that made her decide not to enter the café.

The four male bodies were wearing blue armour, they were the guards stationed in this neighbourhood. Just to avoid making contact with them, she had left the café and gave up the chance to have tea with Basara and the others—

…I should've taken refuge in a place further away.

Just as she was feeling regret over her own judgement—

"Those clothes… a maid from the castle? If I remember correctly, it's probably—"

The soldiers looking into the alley noticed her appearance, and the soldier beside the one who just spoke nodded and said:

"Oh – this girl is the one the higher ups took in, the Zolgear's subordinate, right?"

The expression in his eyes he used to look at Zest also cooled down substantially.

"Oi, what is someone who was the Current Demon Lord's dog doing sneaking around here? Are you planning to blow up one of the sop filled with customers?"

"……No. I was running an errand, and am currently having some rest here."

"A person alone hiding and having some rest?"

Hearing him say so suspiciously, another soldier said while sneering:

"Say, Glen, you didn't mean [A person], but [A thing] instead, right?"

Despite receiving gazes filled with extreme contempt and verbal insults, yet—

"……"

Zest endured it silently. It was nothing surprising, from the perspective of the soldiers of the Moderates Faction, there would definitely be animosity towards Zest who was part of the Current Demon Lord's cadre; enemies like Basara who put themselves in their shoes were extremely rare. But it was because Basara was that sort of person, Zest could not hold any hate towards him.

"Why the hell would those higher-ups make such a dumb decision, to take in the sex slave of some arrogant big scum?"

"Who knows, that might've been a better decision? After becoming tired of playing with the maids serving them, those big figureheads cannot go to some brothel on the streets, much less call a prostitute into the castle. Having some different flavours to play with is nice, and the fact that it's a second-hand product makes no difference."

"That makes sense… So those higher-ups just want to find a toy with lasting appeal, right?"

The gazes of the soldiers with their mouths full of insults towards Zest became dirtier, and their eyes began looking all over her body brazenly, before stopping on a certain place. The place their gazes were all fixated on, were her large breasts which had grown to the point where her breasts were obvious even in her maid uniform, while she dreamt about Basara in her days.

It had grown to the point where during their reunion, Basara couldn't help but to look at them. Back then, Zest didn't mind it at all – instead, it made her happy; but right now, those gazes only made her feel disgusted.

"—Say, let us have some fun too, 'kay?"

After the soldier named Glen said that, the other soldiers looked at each other and smiled, and they began approaching her. Seeing this—

「……Quickly be on your way.」

Zest nudged the little unicorn on its back, letting it seek refuge in the other end of the alleyway before facing the soldiers before her.

"……."

"What's wrong…? You do service those higher-ups in the city often right?"

Facing these soldiers with dirty smiles on their faces, Zest remained silent.

…I guess it's inevitable that other people would think that…

Zolgear's prurience[9] is well known throughout the Demon Realm, and it is only matched by a few. Thus, they could hardly be blamed for thinking that Zest who had fought under him was like that too. But in reality, Zolgear had created her in a way so that her power comes from her virginity, and thus have never requested for Zest to do the thing between a man and woman with him. Although she didn't know what intentions he had—

…But still,

She is now glad that he had done that. If Zolgear had encroached on her– she would've cursed for all her life. To have never been encroached by anyone, that matter is now Zest's most important wish. Now that Zest had managed to get the task of looking after Basara while he is in the Demon Realm, it would be fine even if it was on a whim or was just a joke – she wished to be able to serve Basara as a woman.

That moment of happiness shall become Zest's most treasured memory, pushing her to continue her life.

That's why, she can't be sullied by these soldiers before her.

…However,

It was only with Basara's help that she was able to come to the Moderates Faction and become Sheera's subordinate. If anything were to happen here now, she might cause him trouble – and that was something she could not allow to happen.

"……!"

That's right that's right, stay like that quietly. Things like a maid, was originally supposed to be used for things like that."

One of the soldiers boldly stretched his hand towards Zest biting her lips in resentment.

Though separated by her clothes, her breasts which had grown bigger due to longing for Basara were about to be toched by someone else – but right before that happened—

"—enough is enough."

A hand, with that voice, came from the side, and grabbed that soldier's arm.

『————！?』

This unexpected development not only shocked that soldier, but also everyone else—

"…Basara-sama!"

Zest too widened her eyes in shock. The one she had longed for – Toujou Basara had appeared by her side, and after giving her a wink—

"She is a maid serving under Sheera-sama. You do know that if you do anything to her, there will be serious consequences?"

By saying that in a polite tone while blocking them from Zest, it was probably to avoid the trouble from having their identities exposed and thus going along with cleric's attire, trying to send them away

like another servant. One of the soldiers then said after regaining his calm:

“Who the hell are you… are you with this person?”

“That’s right. She is someone important to me… Showing her disrespect, might cause trouble to me.”

“Another servant, huh… stay right there and don’t move. If you’re nice, we might let you play a bit too.”

Seeing him laughing and turning towards Zest, Basara gave a deep sigh.

“…I guess there’s no other way.”

In the moment Zest saw Basara whisper that – that soldier was blown away.

What Basara had done, was one of Aikido’s moves. [10]

He had swiftly grabbed the soldier’s wrist and pushed it downwards, and focused his energy to twist it – as a result, that soldier who wanted to violate Zest turned a circle in mid-air.”

Although there was the option of bringing Zest away from that place or shouting to attract the attention of the other people on the streets, there was of course a reason Basara chose to use force.

--It was to resolve the problem at its root.

They were people who couldn't be reasoned with, what just happened may repeat again if they were to run away now and if Zest were to run into them again. In order to not have a 'next time', they must learn the errors of their ways right here and now.

Thus, the moment that soldier landed on his back on the ground, Basara pulled and twisted on the joint of the hand he was grabbing onto, dislocating both the shoulder and elbow joints while creating two cracking sounds in the process.

" ! ! Gaaaaaaaaaaaa--aaaaaaaa!!?"

Basara then mercilessly kicked his foot at the soldier squirming and screaming on the ground, the impact dislocated his jaw, and the originally sharp scream turned into gibberish. After that—

"Dear dignified soldier… can you please not scream like that just from having a few of your joints dislocated by this insignificant cleric?"

Basara looked down at that soldier, and purposely harshly ridiculed him. Not only was it to fell his spirit, it was also to make the other three develop a fear towards him, hoping to make them run away from fear – but alas, the situation did not develop as he hoped it would. While one of them did nothing out of fear, the other two drew their swords. To that—

…would be best if I don't take out Brynhildr here.

It would be best if they were to remain thinking that he was just a cleric throughout. If these soldiers were to lose to a cleric, they

probably wouldn't have the face to tell it to the other soldiers after returning to the palace.

"You arrogant brat, stop acting big!"

Seeing the soldier at the front moving his sword to make a slash at him, Basara simply moved sideways to avoid it. Since this alley is narrow, in order to avoid hitting the sword on wall, the room to swing the sword is very limited. So, it would be very simple to just make the sword miss its mark.

"That's too obvious -- hmph."

In a flash, Basara dug his left elbow into that soldier's lower jaw.

That attack was unbiased, and cracking sounds was released from that soldier's upper and lower teeth.

「ーーーーーー」

Receiving the impact on his head, the now unconscious soldier collapsed on the ground – Basara then released another kicked at his chest, causing him to hit the other soldier holding onto his sword.

" ! …Move aside, you idiot!" "—you're the idiot here."

Once his movements stopped, the results couldn't be changed. While his opponent had his footing slightly messed up, Basara frog jumped on the left and right walls going out of his opponent's view, doing a flip over him and connected his right heel with his forehead, producing some cracking sounds. The soldier staggered for a bit, rolling his eyes, before collapsing backwards.

Settled. Just as Basara wanted to release his breath—

"--?"

He sucked in more air again. The soldier from just now who couldn't do anything had now extended both his hands and expanded a magic circle. This place is narrow, a shop full of customers was just beside them, and they are soldiers – Basara had thought they had that self-awareness, and thus would not use any magic to avoid doing damage to nearby buildings and civilians. Probably because they panic, they now lost their calm.

"You scum…!"

Although how bad that person is, he is still a soldier, so how could he – to deal a blow to him before the magic activated, Basara began to move towards him.

--But there was no need for that already.

Because before Basara moved, the magic circle already disappeared. Not only that—

"Ah…Oo…Aaa…!"

That soldier who attempted to release magic now lay on the ground, paralysed, with fear obvious on his face.

Just why? Basara somewhat had an idea – and thus without even turning around, he said to the one behind im:

"Calm down, Zest – killing them would be going too far."

"…But these people wanted to kill you."

From her anger-filled cold voice, the S-Class Zest's killing intent was evident. Thinking back, Zest had used many different types of magic circles; the moment these kind of stuff activated, no one will know what will happen to this neighbourhood. Thus—

"Don't worry about me. What I wanted to do was not to have them harass you anymore, and it does not mean – I want to kill them. There is no need for you to do these sort of stud, and let yourself turn into just like these people who wanted to kill me."

Hearing Basara say that, Zest slowly cancelled the magic.

"……I understand. I will… listen to Basara-sama's orders."

"I'm sorry. I made the first move, yet I'm saying this."

After saying that to Zest with a bitter smile, he looked downwards to check on the collapsed soldiers. That soldier who originally wanted to violate Zest but was taught a harsh lesson by Basara,

"Wuu…aaa…uh….uoo---!?"

Suddenly feeling Basara's gaze while moaning in pain, his face froze up.

"Relax, I only just dislocated your joints, and didn't break any nerves. The pain you feel right now is only from moving around on the ground. If you see a doctor after returning to the palace, the joints can be fully put back."

"Oh…aah…?"

“It’s true. If you know that you are in the wrong, then don’t do these sort of stuff again. If you get caught by me again, I definitely won’t let you off the hook – even if Zest wants to kill you, I wouldn’t mind it.”

“---…---…!”

Seeing him nodding his head vigorously, Basara said: [Ok] and also nodded.

“We’re going now. When the others wake up, remember to tell them what I just said. Let’s go.”

Basara grabbed Zest’s hand after saying that, and walked towards the alley’s other end.

If anyone were to see them walking out of the alleyway the soldiers walked in from, the information of them defeating those soldiers might spread. Their priority right now should be concealing their whereabouts by taking more turns within these alleys, drawing as much distance as possible from that place. Thus—

“Zest, why did you not take any action even though you met—“

Basara suddenly could not continue with his reprimanding tone.

Reason being – Zest suddenly hugged him tightly, with no intention of letting go.

“……I’m sorry, to have caused you trouble… Please bear with this for now.”

Tightening her hug, Zest’s body shook slightly.

…I see.

Toujou Basara understood it. Despite receiving protection as a witness, Zest who once was part of the Current Demon Lord Faction would receive a lot of complex grudges in the Moderates Faction, and would face many different challenges; if she were to cause any trouble,she would fall into a very difficult position. Thus in order to maintain her current situation, she beared with those soldiers.

“You must be very scared… But, it’s all fine now.”

Basara returned Zest’s hug, rubbing her back to placate her.

--Reportedly although Zest was Zolgear’s subordinate, she had no bodily contact with him.

While this is a good thing for her, it also meant that she had built up no immunity or resistance towards other people’s actions concerning her body; moreover as she was to maintain a close distance with Zolgear while he did lewd acts, it wouldn’t be weird if she were to develop any physiological hate towards t. Despite all that, Zest still beared with the actions of those soldiers.

…Probably because Zest has got a strong sense of responsibility.

Or perhaps she was scared that if anything happened, blame might be placed on Sheera who was supervising her, or even Basara who handed her over to the Moderates faction, thus gritting her teeth and bearing with it all.

Hence, Toujou Basara said it as if delivering it into her ears:

“Zest – you are a girl. Will you promise me, that you will treasure yourself in the future?”

Basara had called her a [Girl], and worried for her, After that—

"I beat up those guys just now… it was because they wanted to do what girls hate the most to you."

"……!"

In Basara's arms, Zest's breaths came to a stop.

…I can't…!

If she were to be careless even a little, her tears would come out. She had not expected that it would not only be Mio and the others – Zest was also receiving Basara's care. Though it was incomparable to Mio and the others, it was still a fact that Basara right now is by her side, hugging her.

And gazing at her – worrying for her.

"Back then, I saw you restraining yourself to that extent… Could it be that ever since you came here, things like that had happened?"

For Basara who was worrying for her, Zest shook her head while within his arms and answered:

"…No. I was always by Sheera-sama's side, and I would remain within the city."

"Then, did anyone in the city do something like that to you?"

"No… Because Sheera-sama always treated me well."

"—Really?"

"Really – I have never been touched by another male. Please believe me, Basara-sam!"

Zest began panicking from Basara's questions, and nervously confirmed them.

The reason Zest was trembling, was because her body was almost touched by a male other than Basara.

"Like hugging me like this, Basara-sama is my first…"

"I-I see… I'm glad you're fine."

Probably because she had a large reaction, Basara believed her. Thinking that—

「———————」

Zest suddenly felt her energy suddenly leaving her whole body.

Having her fear that Basara would mistakenly think that she had an affair with another male – the nervousness that was present until now left her exhausted.

"—Oh?"

Basara quickly grabbed onto Zest who almost collapsed.

"Are you fine…?"

"I'm very sorry… The moment when I think about Basara trusting me, my energy suddenly—"

Zest tried to stand up by herself, but her legs couldn't summon the energy to do that.

"I'm sorry, Basara-sama, I'm very sorry… I will immediately stand properly…!"

She did not want to cause trouble to Basara, yet she had become like that. Zest became nervous to the point of wanting to cry.

"You have nothing to apologise for – here you go." "Ah--…"

In the blink of an eye, Zest ended up being carried by Basara on his back.

"Y-You can't, Basara-sama… You can't do something like that, so please put me down."

I should be the one looking after Basara… Seeing Zest becoming flustered, Basara bitterly smile and said:

"How can I do that? Didn't I just say – you should treasure yourself more?"

"But…!"

"If you're worried about being seen by others, I'll just put you down when we leave the alleys. So just try letting me carry you, and think about what I mean by treasuring yourself."

Saying that, Basara began walking slowly, and—

"…I guess occasionally relying on others is great too, right?"

Hearing Basara say while smiling, Zest resisted as if not being able to tolerate these sort of jokes:

“My job is to be responsible for looking after you, Basara-sama. Now that I’m being cared for by you, how could I—“

[I see]. Basara suddenly interrupted her in a low voice.

“Since you don’t like it, then forget it – I don’t want to be like those people from just now, doing something that you don’t like to you.”

And then simply began to place Zest back on her feet.

In that moment – Zest suddenly thought that she was about to be coldly brushed away by Basara—

“No – D-Don’t!”

She tightly shut her eyes, and tightly grabbed onto Basara’s shoulders, afraid of separating from him.

However, after ten long seconds, she realised that Basara had not let go of her. When she worriedly and timidly opened her eyes—

“Ah--…”

And she couldn’t hold back her deep sigh. Because before her eyes, was Basara’s loving expression.

It was just like the expression he would often show to Mio and the others. Other than that—

—what did I, just do?

That hasty reaction, originally dwelled within her heart, her true feelings.

…Ah…

Hence, she could no longer conceal her true self. She clearly remembered, the result and ending she wanted for that youth called Toujou Basara and herself; and with that sentiment, the one who caused her soul to tremble incessantly was no one than than Basara – and her emotions for Basara immediately became stronger. However, being this bold towards Basara—

「…Now I have realised, Basara-sama, you are so naughty.」

Zest pushed her face against his back and said while rubbing it against his back.

Basara gave no reply, only just returning a sigh and a bitter smile.

"Sorry… But for today, I need to protect that part."

But his voice suddenly became serious, and continued walking while carrying Zest.

"Basara-sama…?"

As she couldn't see his expression, she asked back worried, feeling some inexplicable unease, and thus missed Basara's whisper at the end.

He said in a cold and frightening tone:

"I swear to definitely protect you all – no matter what I have to do."

Part 5

“There someone like that amongst the guards in the downtown area…”

After meeting up with Mio and the other in the café and returning to the castle,

Hearing Basara and Zest’s encounter with the downtown guards, Noel’s expression became depressed.

Right now – Yuki had returned first as she was worried about Kurumi’s condition, and Basara, Mio and Zest are now visiting the east side’s training field.

The ones currently training, are the selected outstanding soldiers like guards and knights of the Moderates Faction.

“The castle’s soldiers really do look more like soldiers…”

Basara commented while looking at the soldiers training.

“That’s of course! Here, the knights and trainee knights are pride of the Moderates Faction!”

Noel was right, every one of them seemed dashing.

However – even while being optimistic, these numbers were small.

Of course, the past war between the Heroes and Demons or the past conflict between Demons were different from the modern soldiers using modern weapons to make up for their lack of strength in the

current modern conflict with the Human Realm, with the main difference being [Individuals] with a lot of power; to list some examples, there were Jin who was known as the God of War who defeated countless demons, and Wilbert whose power was matched by none and had united the Demon Realm. At the core of the Current Demon Lord Faction, there were the Conservative and Radical Factions with long histories, and the heroic-like figure youth Leohart who had rapidly gained power was also a pretty good example.

The Moderates Faction has people like Maria, Takigawa, and Lucia with A to S Class powers; with the Moderates Faction led by Wilbert's brother Ramusas, it is obvious that they have a lot of strength, and now Zest is also present. So even if the Current Demon Lord Faction has many high-class demons or ones with equivalent fighting powers, the fighting wouldn't be one-sided.

Therefore the Current Demon Lord Faction will also try to avoid consuming or depleting their fighting potential, by attempting to not let the current situation of the war turn into an all-out war, since that would mean the deciding factor wouldn't be numbers.

--However, that doesn't mean numbers doesn't matter.

In the current situation where both sides has a limited amount of fighting force, what would decide the outcome in the end would be the amount of soldiers.

In a war where there is a need to defend a civilian town, the importance of troops was obvious.

Because even if someone has the ability to wipe out all of the enemy, there is no guarantee of being able to protect all comrades.

In the past – when Wilbert was still the Demon Lord, the reason the Moderates Faction had its moment in the glamorous spotlight was because many capable fighters had come under his command, attracted by his qualities or his ideals. This Vereda City, is the proof of its brilliant days. Yet [End the war, and create eternal peace in the Demon Realm] – the goal the Moderates Faction sang so highly of, was a pipe dream realised only because of the existence of the strongest Demon Lord Wilbert; thus after losing the overwhelming lord, soldiers of the Moderates left Vereda City one after another. At first, they tried putting in their all to try to complete Wilbert's unfinished ambition, but in the end it was just a too large and too big of an ambition, not something the ones left behind could do. Hence—

"So in the end, they had to recruit fighting forces from the outside, just like the taking in of those who had Human Blood mixed in them – so the ones Basara had met, was one of the disadvantages of the last-minute cramming?"

"I'm really sorry, Mio-sama… I'll ask the executives of the downtown guards to re-educate them on their ethics."

Noel bowed deeply and apologized to Mio who had a look of displeasure on her. In order to face the Current Demon Lord Faction whose forces were growing quickly, the Moderates Faction could only open their gates and accept various types of people in order to fill up and scrape together enough forces. This, was the current miserable situation of the once greatest Moderates Faction.

…In the end, Mio is a trump card they want to use to break out of the current situation.

No matter if Mio chooses to become the new Demon Lord or to let go of her inherited power, her presence in the Moderates Faction would be similar to Wilbert's influence. In the current war with the Current Demon Lord Faction where they wanted to protect the civilians, they most probably want to make use of Wilbert's sole daughter to woo their past soldiers and comrades to return. Regretfully, it seems that the Moderates Faction have now been backed into a corner to this extent. They were holding on to such hopelessness, so it's somewhat understandable.

"……"

As Basara was organising his thoughts and feelings, a horse carriage suddenly came in from the gate near the downtown area. The white carriage was covered in luxurious ornaments and carvings, and it was obvious that it was on a different level from the carriage Basara and the others had taken.

"That is…"

Taking a closer look, Lucia and her subordinates were lined up before the gate, and the white horse carriage came to a stop before them. After the door opened, a male demon exited the carriage before Lucia and the others who bowed.

" ! -----"

Beside Basara, Mio suddenly stiffened her body. The male who exited the carriage, his posture and appearance were just like in the Wilbert's portrait. The nearby training soldiers also stopped and kneeled, and Noel and Zest also did so. The male demon noticed the movements here, and responded his his line of sight, and – his sight turned to Basara and Mio.

…This is bad.

Basara and Mio were still wearing the cleric and maid uniform they wore to go into the city area, so they might be mistaken for servants who didn't know their manners. Just as Basara didn't know what to do, Lucia whispered something into that male demon's ear, and in the next moment—

「————！」

Toujou Basara sucked in a breath. Just by looking in this direction from far away, that male demon – a shocking oppression made it through to Basara.

If – he had shown any movements with the intention of drawing nearer, no matter how little it was, Basara might have immediately drawn out Brynhildr instinctively. However—

『———————』

The male demon didn't move towards them at all, only simply walking into the castle following Lucia and her subordinates, as if uninterested in them.

Being freed from that oppression, Basara finally released his breath.

"……!"

By his side, Mio appeared to have been frightened by that feeling of oppression just now, to the point where she was still trembling even now. Thus Basara held her shoulder—

"Mio… Don't be scared, he already went away."

Saying so gently, Mio then put a lot of energy into nodding. Seeing that male disappearing into the castle gates, Basara asked:

"Originally we were told that he would return only tomorrow – Zest, is he *that person*?"

"…Yes, Basara-sama."

Towards Basara question, Zest nodded and answered:

"That person is the current head of the Moderates Faction – the elder brother of the previous Demon Lord his majesty Wilbert, Ramusas-sama."

Translator Notes and References

1. Jump up↑ His majesty
2. Jump up↑ Something about honorifics denoting respect for a King/someone in a highest position of power. I improvised something similar in english
3. Jump up↑ internal body clocks
4. Jump up↑ or Middle Ages
5. Jump up↑ supernatural legendary creature, often depicted as fairy, ghost, or elfs
6. Jump up↑ kanji used was 主人 <Shu Jin>, which can mean master/owner/host/chief/head/landlord/etc…
7. Jump up↑ -殿下, also [royal highness]
8. Jump up↑ his flower stall
9. Jump up↑ Inordinately interested in matters of sex; lascivious
10. Jump up↑ Aikido : a modern Japanese martial art

Chapter 3 - A New Master-Servant Contract

Part 1

After a long period of time, the meeting with the Council ended.

Leohart returned to his office, summoned a few of his trusted subordinates and notified them of the future goals requested by the Council, as well as the methods requested to achieve them. This space is filled with high-class furnishings and covered by a thick red carpet, a style that seemed befitting that of a Demon Lord's. After Leohart explained the general decision reached at the meeting—

"—to put the recently excavated spirits into battle, and defeat the Moderates Faction – is it really true?"

First to speak up, was Leohart's aide Balthier.

"I can't take it anymore… Although this is not the first time that genius Council ordered us to risk our lives, it's too much of a headache this time…"

"—Luca, what's the condition of the spirits?"

The one Leohart directed his question to, is a young demon holding onto a file.

"I'm very sorry… As like yesterday's report, we managed to successfully release the seal on them, but—"

The youth called Luca lowered his eyes apologetically.

“We ran into some problems when attempting to make the Master-Servant Contract with them, so we would need more time to do it.”

Just then, a warm hand rested on Luca’s head.

“Don’t be sad about it… After all, those spirits are relics from the Demon-God War, so being able to establish a Contact with it is already amazing, don’t look down on yourself.”

“Gardo…”

At the blury male demon trying to comfort him, Luca raised his tearful eyes.

“Gardo’s right, there’s nothing to blame yourself over… no need to act with undue haste.”

Leohart then said:

“Well then – according to your estimates, how long do you need to establish a Master-Servant Contract with them?”

“Four days… No, two days, I will accomplish in two days!”

“Didn’t I just tell you not to be too hasty… Much less sleep, you didn’t manage to get any rest these few days, right? You’re the only one able to deal with those spirits, so it’ll be bad if you get tired. This concerns our important fight – no sentimental emotions are allowed at all.”

“If your majesty says so, then I better prepare the spirits as soon as possible. No problems at all… Even if I collapse, there are many scholars proficient with ancient technology in this city.”

“Luca… Your majesty Leohart didn’t mean that.”

“Eh…?”

Balthier pointed out with a bitter smile, causing Luca to widen his round eyes.

“Indeed, there are many scholars or professors familiar with ancient technology and weapons in this city, however, the only one Leohar can trust unconditionally is you only, Luca.”

With Gardo’s explanation, Balthier also nodded and said: [That's right]

“It’s great that you don’t want to disappoint your deadlines and responsibilities – although you are still young, and as one of those closest to your majesty Leohart, I trust that you are able to understand when your majesty Leohart his concerned for your health?”

With Balthier’s edging, Luca finally understood what they are getting at.

“……I’m sorry.”

“No need to apologise. Everyone here knows clearly that you are giving your all.”

Leohart then said while looking at the remorseful Luca with serious eyes:

“As me aide, I will not permit half-assed work and results. I will ask you once more, Luca – under a load where you can withstand, how long will you need to establish the Master-Servant Contract with the spirits?”

"……Three, please give me three days. I will establish the Master-Servant Contract with the spirits in three days! In that time, I will also finish repairs and adjustments to their cores, and they will be ready for battle after doing some simple tests when the Contract is established."

"I understand, I will trust will judgement then…"

Hearing Leohart's words, Luca then replied with a bright smile: [Yes!]. Gardo then roughly stroked his head, making him out in retaliation: [Geez! Don't treat me like a kid!]

Watching the interaction between Gardo and Luca—

…The spirits are settled, and next is—

Leohart began thinking about the other problem.

"Then again – just how are we supposed to materialise the ridiculous order to attack from the Council?"

Just then, a bitter smile appeared on Balthier's straight face while he sighed.

"Although the Moderate Faction's power and influence is nowhere near as great as in their heyday…there are still many in various parts of the Demon Realm that still hold much attachment for Wilbert. In terms of battle prowess, we are undoubtedly above the Moderates Faction -- so we have to find a justifiable 『Nominal』[1] to avoid civilians protesting in the various districts.

He was right. Carelessly attacking the Moderates Faction will be seen as a one-sided slaughter, inviting criticism.

A war is not purely about a battle of strength –converted political interests are deeply entangled with it. If someone with a ulterior motive were to get a chance at all – the other factions and powers that have bee only observing to this day would suddenly rise in power.

…Abhorrent old thieves.

Those high-class demons who have lived for a very long time and are among the Council's ranks, no longer see anyone else as one of their kind; the civilians to them are nothing more than entertainment, the civilians' lives does not matter at all, only their own appeasement matters. That's why, they must be thoroughly eliminated.

…Also.

Leohart deeply believed, that only he and his comrades will be able to accomplish that big task.

Hence, he had to obey the Council for now in order to preserve his position as the Demon Lord, but that didn't mean that he had to let them have all they want.

Just as Leohart began to think deeply about the Nominal—

"—Well, I do have a reason to make people sit by quietly and watch us attack the Moderates Faction."

Someone who had also answered to the summon but yet had remained quiet until now spoke.

That someone is Naruse Mio's new observer after Zolgear stirred up some problems.

Someone who had entered the Human Realm with the alias Takigawa Yahiro, a youth attending the same school as Naruse Mio.

"…And what would it be, Lars?"

Leohart asked, raising an eyebrow, to which Lars answered blatantly:

"Wilbert's daughter – Naruse Mio, is current within the Demon Realm."

"—Are you for real?"

Shrugging to the Balthier who widened his eyes in disbelief, Lars answered:

"What I said is indeed the truth… After Wilbert's demise, the Moderates Faction has come to a standstill over the problem of insufficient battle potential. After those people wrecked their brains over this, their solution is to bring Naruse Mio to the Demon Realm. Although it is unclear if they will legimately crown her as a new Demon Lord or extract the power she inherited… they will want to make use of her to regain some of their former glory."

Hence—

"Hence – we just have to take advantage of their way of thinking. The Moderates Faction wants to make use of Wilbert's daughter and her inherited power to rule over the Demon Realm once again – we should be able to shut the other factions in the Demon Realm if we were to say that we dispatched our forces in response to their rebellion."

“I see… If what you say is the truth, it is indeed a reason justifiable enough to send out our troops.”

Hearing Leohart say so--

“Ara, Your Majesty -- you don’t trust what your aide says?”

Lars replied playfully. In reply to the sarcasm from his fellow comrade from the previous war--

“Lars, there’s still us here -- stop using that disgusting tone.”

“Alright alright… So, do you not trust me, Leohart? That piece of information is supposed to be highly classified and even the people within the Moderates Faction doesn’t know about it, so it’s not your fault if you doubt me.”

In reply to the smiling Lars, Leohart said:

“No, I believe you -- you are a spy sent here by the Moderates Faction, so it’s normal for you to receive classified information.”

Leohart already knew long ago that Lars is a spy sent by the Moderates Faction.

How long ago? --The answer is, right from the start. Leohart had took in Lars while knowing clearly of its consequences. And Lars had accepted becoming Leohart’s subordinate while knowing clearly of what consequences that would bring. Lars’s current identity within the Current Demon Lord Faction, is that he is a newbie to the Current Demon Lord Faction who had defected from the Moderates Faction; as to the Moderates Faction, he is playing the role of a spy who

successfully infiltrated the enemy's camp. That, is the mask that Lars had voluntarily put on.

And right now -- the only ones who knows of Lars's true identity, are the few present in the room.

"…Is this really fine, Lars?"

Leohart then asked:

"You are not only a spy sent from the Moderates Faction, but also Naruse Mio's protector. To you who had grew up under education from the Moderates Faction, shouldn't Wilbert be your most admired person?"

"Yes, it is -- all that is already past me."

[After all], Lars continued:

"I have already personally ended Zolgear's life, avenging my brothers… I have no more obligation left to do anything for the Moderates Faction."

That's right -- it was Lars himself who told the people in this room that he ended Zolgear's life.

The reason that Leohart had sent Balthier to investigate when Zolgear's psionic response disappeared, is because an agreement was already made with Lars beforehand. Leohart's goal is to wipe out the old bastards of the Council -- Zolgear who was one of them had killed many who were like brothers and sisters to Lars; thus the two of them agreed that when the chance comes, Lars will personally end Zolgear's life. Hence, when Zolgear's psionic response disappeared,

Leohart's first guess was that Lars had successfully completed his revenge -- and had then received confirmation from him himself. Thus--

"I've told you before, that from now onwards, I will continue to help you get rid of those leeches -- those scum no different from Zolgear, so don't worry."

There were no signs of lying at all in Lars's words, but--

"…That's not set in stone."

Leohart then continued:

"Lars… The reason you gave your assistance to me up till now, wasn't it because that I, who wanted to kill those scum, could help you to personally kill Zolgear? Now that you had accomplished your objective -- isn't it right that you have no further obligation to provide anymore assistance?"

Right?

"In point of fact -- you had chosen Jin·Toujou's son to work with to kill Zolgear, not me. So, shouldn't it be natural for you to continue working with him?"

"Haven't I told you already? I didn't choose him because he is better than you…"

Lars sighed again, and continued in a low voice:

"The reason was -- if I had continued to observe and do nothing, Toujou Basara might have very well killed Zolgear himself, putting to

waste my years of effort and plotting. So I had no choice but to work with him to be able to personally kill Zolgear, that's simply all that is to it."

"Jin·Toujou's son has that much power?"

Balthier asked doubtfully:

"Marquis[2] Zolgear might have been old, but that person who had been known as 『Sword King』 was fairly powerful; and yet the youth called Toujou Basara… From your reports, he doesn't seem to have enough power to be able to defeat Zolgear, right?"

"Affirmative. That person's power is indeed below that of Zolgear's. But I think…even without my help, he would still be able to rescue Naruse Mio and defeat Zolgear.

Lar's seriousness, caused the others to become silent, and then--

"Then again -- an opportunity to personally kill Zolgear came to me just like that, so how could I possibly let it go?"

Lars said with a bitter smile.

"Alright, since that is the case, no need for anymore further speculation. Don't worry anymore, when the Great War ended, someone had asked me to help take good care of you"

" ? Just who would even do tha--"

"--That would be Your Highness Riara."

Lars's answer--

“Onee-sama…?”

Leohart showed surprise.

“Who could possibly reject her request when being asked by that smiling face? If there’s a need, we could just send the spirits I brought along with me to defeat the Moderates Faction; on the other hand, if you still want me to leave being unable to trust me, I will just obediently leave.”

“No need to do any of that, there would be no need your thoughtful kindness.”

At Lars’s suggestions, Balthier sighed and said:

“We have already known you for so many years since the Great War, of course I believe you -- I only fear that you would return to the Moderates Faction should you leave or take the spirits along with you. Both me and your majesty Leohart knows too well just how troublesome of a person you can be.”

“Ara, is that so?”

As Lars shrugged his shoulders with a [Ah]--

“--Then hand the spirits over to me.”

A bulky figure said with a low voice -- Gardo.

“As an aide, Balthier would want to avoid leaving Leohart’s side. And since Lars is not an option, I am the only one left.”

“……I’m sorry, Gardo.”

Leohart lowered his eyes, and then said to the older male demon:

“The one who was originally supposed to be the Demon Lord was you -- no, you[3].”

From the same generation of high-class demons as Leohart, Gardo’s powers and bloodline was seen to be the most suitable for the throne by the old elders from not the Council, but the Conservative Faction.

However, in the process of changing the Conservative and Radicals Factions’ image that now is a new era within the Demon Realm, the old elders from the Council still chose Leohart to be on the throne.

--And Gardo had no choice but to follow their decision.

And voluntarily chose to be a subordinate of the new Demon Lord, becoming Leohart’s aide.

The edges of the lips of that selfless male curled into a smile, and said:

“Don’t mind it, I am also here to be a helping hand. I would of course be delighted to give my assistance to you, who wants to change the world where authority had completely fallen into the Council’s hands after Wilbert’s failed attempt to cleanse and change it.”

“Gardo…”

Luca looked on worriedly, and Gardo once again patted his head.

“When Luca is done doing his stuff with the spirits, I will immediately head out to Vereda City with our troops -- is that decided?”

“Of course, and make sure that they can no longer do anything against us.”

Leohart nodded, and Balthier then supplemented:

“I agree. If possible, deal with their leader Ramusas[4], and let none of them escape. He is Wilbert’s brother, and had gathered the support of many various civilians; if he is gone, the Moderates Faction will most likely collapse.”

“I understand -- what should I do about Wilbert’s daughter?”

After pondering for a few seconds, Leohart gave a reply to Gardo in a calm voice:

“Try to capture her alive. In order to obtain a power to make it possible for us to go against those old bastards in the Council, it would be for the best if we stick to the original plan and use the inherited Wilbert’s power effectively/ That is something that is definitely worth us doing this.”

Part 2

Even after Ramusas had returned to the city, Mio and the rest were not brought back to that small cramped room.

It probably was to be expected. After all, it was a result of Klaus mediating.

The extravagant luxurious dinner atop the table in the luxurious dining room -- even that was assorted to all of their tastes of the food in the Human Realm, with careful and intricate seasoning and preparations -- Sheera and Klaus who was also at the table, as well as Zest and Noel who was responsible for serving them, even gave them

detailed introductions for every single dish. Amongst the hospitality, Ramusas was not to be seen at the table throughout the dinner even when he was supposed to have returned to the city.

--And an hour has already passed since they all had returned to their respective rooms.

Accompanied by Yuki, Maria, and Kurumi, Naruse Mio appeared in a space filled with humidity and warm air.

This space where the naked girls barely showed some decency, is the large bath for female guests.

This large bath filled with thin white steam, was carved from marble -- the grand and impressive facility, gave off the impression and feel of a luxurious high-class hotel or hostel.

…Such amazing places to take a bath are rare. It's a pity that Basara had to be absent from this.

Otherwise, they could just announce to the people in the city who they are.

However, Basara had rejected that idea while giving a bitter smile, saying that he didn't want to provoke the people in the city for no reason, and Mio could only just give up on it. Now -- Mio is sitting on a chair by the wall at the washing area, preparing to wash herself, but--

"--Then, Mio-sama, please excuse me."

Saying that from behind Mio's back is Noel with only a towel wrapped around her. To the ones like Ramusas, she would be of no

further use once Wilbert's power within her is extracted -- but to the ones like Klaus who wished to crown her as a Demon Lord, Mio is the most important VIP they have; thus they even sent a group of people to serve them, from the flushing of the bath to the adjusting of the water's temperature, to washing them; of course Mio and the others and strongly rejected it saying that they wouldn't be able to relax, but as the other party strongly insisted they receive the proper treatment -- they compromised, letting Noel who they had spent time with touring the downtown areas serve them.

"Ah… Sorry to trouble you, Noel."

Mio nodded, and Noel made a obeisance[5] with a [Yes]. Firstly using the warm water in the wooden barrel to wash herself, Noel then began washing Mio's back while creating foam. The maids of the royals and noble were gentle in washing people in order to not damage the skin, and Noel was no different, but--

"…Eh! Ah…..aaaoo!"

When the slippery sensation moved across her back, Mio wasn't able to stem her sexy moans.

"I only just washing your back… Mio-sama is so sensitive? I did hear that Mio-sama had made a Master-Servant Contract with Basara using Maria's powers, is this related to that?"

"W-Well, that…!"

Mio turned red with Noel's teasing.

…Why, am I…!

In the joy of being able to take a bath in another Realm, Mio forgot to prepare herself.

--Since the time she had made the Master-Servant Contract with Basara, Mio's sexiness had been developing with each and every time Basara subjugated her, and right now her body has already become incredibly sensitive; but even then, there was no problems at all while taking a bath in her own home. She could control how much force to use while bathing by herself. But there were many times she had to take a bath together with Basara and Yuki as a result of Maria plots, and adding on the fact that she had experienced her body being thoroughly washed by Basara many times, she would occasionally accidentally let slip some of the reaction she had in those times.

"Could it be that the reason you reduced the number of people serving you, was because you were afraid of people finding out about this? To tell the truth, there was no need for you to worry about that at all…"

" ! …Any more of that, and I will drive you out."

"Being glared at by Mio in embarrassment, Noel giggled and said: [I'm very sorry], and then once again began washing Mio quietly. Naturally, a maid wouldn't just wash a Mio's back, but also her underarms, breasts, butts, hips -- all of that, Noel scrubbed all of those parts.

" ! …Ah …Fu ……Ah …Ya …Ah!"

Mio began biting her lips in desperation to endure it, but that wasn't enough to stop her gasps and moans from escaping, and--

…Don't worry. All these, are completely incomparable to when Basara does it himself…!

That's right. The techniques used were all completely different when Basara was playing with her body. He was always very bold yet cautious, with love and affection within his unyieldingness -- even if he was very rough, he would never let someone be in pain.

Noel wouldn't be able to raise her lewd side like Basara did.

…If it was Basara instead, it might have been…

Basara's big hands, Basara's solid chest, Basara's flair to deliver mindblowing pleasure, and especially Basara warmth that relaxed her the most -- thinking about what he had done in the past, what Noel is doing in comparison gives her only slight embarrassment, itches, and some moans that she couldn't stem; after all, Basara had washed her breasts, underarms, belly button, and even her butt before. Thus, Mio restored her calm and handed over her body to Noel's washing, and after that came her long hair. Her combing, was just as comfortable at it being done in a salon.

"Umm, Mio-sama…"

Just then, Noel suddenly said that, causing Mio to suddenly become vigilant, thinking that she was about to tease her again. But--

"May I ask, how is Lars doing?"

"Lars… Are you talking about Takigawa?"

The impression of Takigawa was too strong, making her unable to connect him to his original name.

“Well… He seems to get along with Basara pretty well, since he spends a lot of time in school with him. Probably because they’re like-minded, those two boys mess around a lot.”

But after finding out that Takigawa was the one behind that white mask, Mio and Yuki wasn’t very happy. As Takigawa said some cruel words to reopen the wound in his heart while he was critically injured, both of them are still unable to forgive him.

“Why do you suddenly ask…? Do you know him?”

“……Yes. Lars and I grew up in the same orphanage.”

From her tone, it was easy to guess what kind of emotions Noel held for Takigawa.

…It’s the same as me.

She has had the same thoughts when she found out Basara and Takigawa and joined hands in the shadows.

Just like when she found out that Maria and Basara had been out in the nights hunting rouge evil beings.

The wanting to ask, just why, were they doing such dangerous things without telling her.

But Mio couldn’t. Because for Mio, Basara putting himself in danger wasn’t for any reason other than protecting her. If Takigawa hadn’t helped, Sheera who was taken captive by Zolgear would probably have already been killed; the reason Maria could escape from that tragic ending, was because Basara and joined hands with Takigawa. Because of that, Mio couldn’t say anything about it to Basara.

It's just -- right now, there was a way to erase Noel's pain, and the key lies within Mio's hands. So after her hair was washed--

"Noel, I--"

Mio turned around, to say something to Noel -- but at that time, someone entered the washing area and sat down on the chair beside Mio. The dissemination of transparent beauty, is Yuki who had also made the same Master-Servant Contract with Basara.

"--I'll be using this."

Without looking at either of them directly in the eye, Yuki began to wash herself.

Even without anyone saying anything, the atmosphere began to become awkward.

"……Umm, Mio-sama …I shall not interrupt you any further."

From behind Mio's back, Noel said so as if she had done something wrong, and stood up.

"Please do enjoy our bath, and eliminate fatigue from your body… I will be awaiting orders in the changing room -- Yuki[6], please excuse me."

"Ah…"

While washing her body, Yuki nodded, and hence Noel left the bath after giving a bow. And then--

"--You're thinking that by going to ask Klaus yourself, you can cancel Takigawa's spying mission, right?"

Hearing Yuki say snappily--

“I only just…”

Mio lowered her head evasively.

“We did not request for a luxurious room or meal, it was all things that they had prepared; so even if they ask us to reciprocate them, we can reject them. However, once we make any request, the situation would be different; if we were asked to reciprocate, it would be difficult for us to reject them. And more importantly -- doing that would be the same as exposing our weak point.”

Have you forgotten?

The demon called Klaus was one of Wilbert’s advisers, a strategist once called the 『Virtuous Elder』. The luxurious rooms, meal, and dining hall and the grand welcoming, all of those were all a performance to make you agree to become the new Demon Lord. If you were to let those people know that you are some able to sympathise with them, do you even know what are the consequences? If you do not want Takigawa to have an even more dangerous mission, if you want to fulfil the wish of a maid worrying for her childhood sweetheart -- the moment he graps onto an emotion he can use to make his attack on you, he’ll immediately attempt to use it to make a negotiation or transaction; and if it still isn’t possible, he might even utilise threats…”

Stopping here, Yuki turned to look at Kurumi who is bathing together with the loli succubus.

“Threats like sending away Maria from your side, and making her carry out suicidal missions are entirely possible -- and since her mother and older sister are here, Maria cannot reject any orders.”

“……I’m sorry.”

Unable to retort -- Mio lowered her head remorsefully.

“No need to apologise… It’s just, I hope that you don’t forget that.”

And as if giving advice, Yuki then said to Mio:

“--Even if you still hadn't decided what to do with Wilbert’s power, I guess that you have already reached a conclusion regarding the identity 『Naruse Mio』, so don’t do forgetting that.”

With that, Mio then nodded in agreement.

“……Ah, you’re right… I got it.”

Right now, she is not the daughter of the previous Demon Lord, but Basara family, his sister -- as well as his servant.

No matter what happens, being by his side is a must. That, is Naruse Mio’s only desire.

And for that very desire, all of them must return to that home one day. Just then--

“It’s fine if you get it, and I will also think of something to help you out -- because that is also Basara’s wish.”

Yuki also quickly expressed to Mio's agreement. In Mio's heart, Yuki is a rival she must never fall behind -- but she was also a comrade who could understand more than anyone. Thus--

"……Thank you, Yuki."

Feeling more at ease, Mio expressed her thanks, mixing in a shade of threatening.

"No need for thanks… Oh, that's right--"

Holding out a towel from the foamy bucket towards Mio, Yuki then said:

"…Mio, help me wash my back."

Towards the tone that of an older sister commanding a younger sister, Mio widened her eyes.

Probably giving some advice made her somewhat cocky. Thus Mio smiled and--

"You have a really high price tag…"

Took that towel and after going behind Yuki, she began scrubbing her back -- not using the towel, but with her hands instead.

The one who had been subjugated by Basara and had her sensitivity raised a lot by him was not Mio only. That's why--

"--Yaaaaaaahhhhhhh!"

Yuki let out a cute scream, while jumping up from the stool.

While soaking in the bath, Nonaka Kurumi saw her older sister in the washing area suddenly jump up while screaming.

And then collapse onto the floor onto her butt.

『……』

Silently turning around to look at Mio who had a victor's smile on her face, Yuki made her counterattack.

After pushing Mio down onto the floor and while straddling over her, she began to violently knead those large breasts.

『 ! ---- 』

Mio screamed, and arched her back under Yuki, and then her two hands began to do the same things to Yuki's butt, not wanting to be outdone.

『 ----! 』

And it was Yuki's turn to react to a sudden kneading -- the two girls thus began waging a war over their pride. Seeing those two older sisters like that--

"……"

''It's better if I don't invite trouble onto myself.'' From within the bath, Kurumi turned around to have her back face the washing area Yuki and Mio were at.

"Ah…!"

And proceeded to take a stretch in the bath[7], letting the warmth of the water fill her. Comfortably exhaling a deep breath, she then scooped some water with her hands. The slightly blue hot spring, seemed to have been drawn directly from underground, so it naturally would have rather high demonic concentrations. However--

…Ah, it seems to have much less of a load on me now.

Comparing to when she had just arrived in the Demon Realm, the level of discomfort she felt back then now seemed to have been just a dream. Although her getting used to the demonic concentrations had a hand in that, it was not the main reason. Thus--

"……"

Kurumi raised her left hand from the water and held it out, and gathered her consciousness towards it, and her gauntlet for controlling spirits then materialised. Within some of the notches in the gauntlet, balls of various colours have been inserted. Those were elements needed for communicating with the spirits.

--Right now, there were a few black balls there weren't there before.

In Lucia's office, Basara and turned the imbroglio[8] in her heart into happiness and pleasure and subjugated her, disentangling her emotions -- when she opened her eyes, Kurumi realised that she was on a bed in another room.

Seeing Maria sleeping while snuggled up against her, she then remembered what Basara had done to her, she then became a ball of internal struggles. At that time, Lucia came to that room and upon

seeing her situation, Lucia then said to the alert Kurumi in a cold and indifferent tone: [Thank you for being friends with Maria], and gave a certain something to her.

That something was these black elementals. These black elementals had the protection of high-class spirits in the Demon Realm, which thus allowed Kurumi to communicate with spirits not bound with a Master-Servant Contract while using spirit magic.

And with the protection of high-class spirits, the difficulty of borrowing a spirits' power was lowered a lot.

For Kurumi who had not made a Master-Servant Contract with Basara and was unable to increase her battle potential by deepening her relationship with him, this was help coming to her when she needed it.

Lucia is part of the Moderates Faction and is a demon, and she is the aide of Ramusas who gave the cold shoulder to Mio. That, made Kurumi to put up some resistance towards Lucia in the beginning, but accepted her in the end. Reason being, her pride as a hero is not what's most important now, but it was instead not becoming a burden to Basara and the others.

Thus for the period of time while she was in the Demon Realm, she hoped to at least to be able to use it.

…To think that I would begin to think like this…

If it was the her in the past, it would be unthinkable for her to live together with Maria who lived together with the surveillance target Naruse Mio, much less fight alongside her.

…Also,

In their daily life, Maria seemed to be putting her in embarrassing situations every day, and she could only just accept it since she wanted to not be left behind. In fact, not just Maria – it would be even Basara or Yuki sometimes. And that is the reason why Kurumi has become the way she is now, boldly doing lewd and lecherous things in Lucia's office, exposing her incredibly debauchery side.

Speaking of which – no matter how embarrassing it has become, rejecting any of that is not an option.

..So it really seems that the truth is I don't really hate those kind of stuff…

Just like Mio and Yuki, Kurumi is slowly becoming more and more lewd.

And it's not only that. Kurumi had turned an event she thought was only possible in her dreams into reality today, to have a kiss with Basara. Although her first time was in her dream, and doing it in reality was only to satisfy Lucia, Kurumi still did automatically move her lips to kiss with Basara's lips – indulging in her sexuality in her tongue filled with emotions, lusting for Basara's existence.

From the moment when their lips made contact, the warmth and pleasure she received from Basara still remained fresh in Kurumi's mind.

"……!"

Kurumi suddenly turned red from the embarrassment and brought her face back into the water partially, while blowing bubbles and not realising that someone was sneaking up on her—

"…--My dear Kurumi~♪"

"Eeeaahhhh!"

Suddenly being hugged from behind by Maria, Kurumi let out a high-pitched scream.

"Oi, don't go about scaring me!"

"Ara, weren't Kurumi you the one who seemed miffed and ignored me, making a certain someone very loney~…?"

"Y-You, would you be looking to over there – at the place older sis and Mio are?"

Maria giggled and said:

"Of course I would, but just me alone doing that would be very boring, and that's why I came over here to enjoy it together with you – just like usual times when we enjoyed erotic films together~."

"W-Weren't you the one who forced me to watch them, saying that it was For Academic Purposes…!"[9]

"And I wasn't wrong at all… That's why this is also research material."[10]

And with a captivating smile, Maria began to massage Kurumi's breasts and started licking her neck.

At Maria's assault, Kurumi attempted to put up her death struggle, trying to shake off Maria while flailing her arms about on the water surface, but failing in the end.

"Hu fufu… You've been through this so many times, but you're just as shy as your first time… Kurumi is really cute~."

With burning flames of passion visible within her eyes, Maria then said:

"Come, Kurumi. Give me your underarms, expose your underarms[11]. I want to fill up your weakness with my saliva."

"----…!"

Shit. If this continues, I will fall into one of Maria's seasoned traps.

And thus, Kurumi turned her line of sight towards the washing area Mio and Yuki were at, hoping for a rescue.

『------』

Despite her attention leaving that area for only a slight moment, the situation there has already changed a lot. With foam covering their bodies, they were still assaulting each other's weak spots while gasping and panting heavily, with no intention of giving up at all; they've not gotten into the hot spring yet, but their eyes have already become lifeless, voices weak, and skins pink. Of course, they're completely oblivious to Kurumi's predicament. When Maria saw that Kurumi now had no one else to turn to for help—

“Fufufu, it’s too bad …Come, give it up and let me lick you, you lewd girl hero~”

“ !~~~~~~”

As Maria’s lips got closer, Kurumi’s eyes also widened as usual in anticipation of the assault of pleasure.

“…Ah? What’s that elemental, I’ve never seen that colour there before?”

Maria then suddenly noticed those black elementals set into her gauntlet.

Which then made Kurumi remember -- what Lucia had said before when she gave them to her. Back then, Lucia had said—

『Please continue to look after my little sister. 』

She did look at the Maria sleeping beside her when she said that.

“----!”

Thus, entrusted with looking after Maria, she asked that black elementals to also look after her.

At the same time, a magic pattern opened up on the floor—

“Eh--…?”

In the moment Maria let out a weird sound upon seeing that – the loli succubus flew out from the bath together with a large amount of bathwater, colliding with Mio and Yuki by the wall in the washing area, and also sending the stools and bucket flying.

“W-W-What happened!? What’s that loud noise!?”

Noel frantically rushed into the bath, but Kurumi remained silent, and then got out from the bath quickly.

“I will definitely use it well with much gratitude…Hmph!”

Throwing that out behind her, Kurumi then left the bath area on her own first.

Part 3

After having dinner alone within his own room, Ramusas left the room, and came to a certain place.

A place that can allow one to look over the city with just a single glance – the top of the main tower, which is the city’s highest.

“……”

Having arrived at that place, Ramusas looked down at the illuminated streets quietly. About fifteen minutes later—

“You insisted on not seeing Mio-sama even once… Is this really for the best?”

Coming to place after a while, Lucia asked him. Hearing his faithful subordinate’s question, Ramusas then answered in a low voice while not moving his sight from the city areas:

“…Why should I go and see her?”

And with that, Lucia decided to not say anymore, and after giving a bow, she moved back and left Ramusas alone.

After that, Ramusas continued standing while the night wind continued to blow.

"------"

Suddenly, Ramusas's eyebrow twitched slightly.

An unnatural change in the night wind's currents just occurred, and it was at a degree where a normal person wouldn't notice – there was a pair of eyes, looking at Ramusas from behind him.

--It was not Lucia, and not one of the maids serving under her.

After that, some more changes to his surroundings occurred. Sounds of footsteps as if announcing a person's existence, slowly neaed him. Then—

"—do you know? There is a place like this platform at where Mio and us live, a place that allows you to look over the nightscape of a city."

Saying those words while standing beside Ramusas, was a youth – Toujou Basara.

Likely, Lucia wasn't the one who had told this youth of this place; no matter who it was, someone was still being nosy. While looking at the view Ramusas, who had decided not to pursue the matter, was looking at, Basara said:

"This afternoon… The maid Noel[12] had brought us into the city to look around. The view that can be seen from here, is what your younger brother – and you who had took over his work, protected to this day."

"……"

Seeing Ramusas return silence as an answer, Basara turned around slowly--

"In what you want to protect, why did you not include Mio?"

And spit out those words filled with a dark shade.

"After your younger brother died – Zolgear killed his subordinates whom he had trusted to bring up Mio. Although Maria had managed to rescue Mio in a critical moment from Zolgear's palm, Zolgear had taken Sheera, and then coerced Maria into following his orders…"

[But]. Basara said:

"According to Takigawa – Lars, you were well aware of this situation, yet you chose to remain quiet and observe, right? No matter how others asked you to prioritise Mio, you still chose to not provide more assistance. Other than Maria who had been coerced by Zolgear, as well as Takigawa who had infiltrated the Current Demon Lord Faction and could not made any obvious moves, you had sent no more help to assist the two with the mission of protecting Mio."

So why?

"Mio is the daughter of your younger brother… In other words, she is your niece. So why did you choose to not make any moves despite knowing that she is faced with such clear danger?"

Being questioned with a firm gaze from Basara, Ramusas finally spoke to answer him – he bluntly said:

"—because there wasn't a need to at all."

"No need to…?"

Basara had already known Ramusas is cold towards Mio.

His reason for still doing all this, was basically just to clarify it all. The truth and reality was just as Lucia had said. Considering that Ramusas has his own set of difficulties and opinions, if Basara would be able to hear about them, he might be able to somewhat understand even if he can't agree with it. However – Ramusas words just now, was still completely beyond Basara's expectations.

"There was still no need even when Maria had no choice but to betray Mio after worrying to no end from being coerced by Zolgear? There was still no need even when Mio had been abducted and have who-knows-what done by Zolgear to her? After all these incidents, are you really going to say that there's no need to increase her protection?"

"Since the reports had said that she's completely safe, is there really a need to ask for more?"

"That was because we…!"

To be able to safely rescue Mio, they all had racked their brains and struggled with their lives. Viewing it from another angle, perhaps being able to save Mio before she was ruined by Zolgear, as well as safely rescuing Sheera who was taken hostage, was the best possible result. However – if back then Ramusas had accepted Klaus and his other subordinates' views to take effective actions like increasing the

amount of protection, then perhaps the incident of Mio being abducted by Zolgear might have never happened.

Additionally, Takigawa even knew where Zolgear was hiding, to the point where he even knew where Sheera was being kept hostage; if he had sent out his elite forces to launch an attack, the culprit known as Zolgear might have already been exterminated long ago. But he hadn't, so he definitely has no right to speak about it – just as Basara gave his retort while becoming mad, Ramusas finally looked at him, and said:

"You guys – how was it? From what I know, the main reason Zolgear had retreated in his defeat was not because of you guys, but it was Wilbert's daughter who let her powers go berserk, right? Even if the reason for it going berserk was due to thinking that Sheera had been killed, she would've put up a great opposition if Zolgear were to casually make any moves against her. With that, even if you and those girls you knew since you were small weren't there, she would still be saved in the end. Would that way of thinking be wrong?"

"……Perhaps it might not have been wrong. Even if he hadn't done anything Mio and Sheera might still be saved."

However – Basara then said wile heavily emphasising:

"Those kind of words, can only be said by the people like us who had taken real action to save Mio and the others – people like you who had just remained standing by the sides and did nothing better than try to score points now that that is already over."

"……"

Basara seems to have hit a sore area, and Ramusas remained quiet.

"…I have no intention of questioning whether your decision was right or wrong. The result in the end was as you said: Mio and Sheera are safe, and Maria and Zest escaped from Zolgear's control. What I would like to question instead, is if you had intentionally disregarded Mio."

Basara then continued:

"But, that's already enough – I already understand it. Originally, I had even speculated if you had gave Mio this attitude because your views were different your younger brother… but no matter what you say, I wouldn't accept it. I have already made the decision to protect Mo – the one who had become my little sister, a person who is part of my family. So matter how big or noble of a reason or excuse you give me, it's not my business at all, and doing any of that would be completely meaningless.

"—so, do you want to following Klaus's words, and let that girl become the next Demon Lord?"

At the question Ramusas asked in a low tone, Basara shook his head and said:

"No… Klaus[13] has been very sincere to us, thinking for our sakes at first glance – but he just want to take advantage of the story that Mio is the only daughter of the previous Demon Lord who had inherited his power, completely ignoring if she has the qualifications to do so and her own will, treating her as only a political tool."

All Mio wants is to be normal girl, who lives a peaceful life.

And having sent her away from his side to live a peaceful life in the Human Realm that too is also all Wilbert wants.

And yet – Klaus who claims to respect and love Wilbert, disregarded his lord's wishes, and is pushing for Mio to be a new Demon Lord. Reportedly, the current Demon lord also seems to have been given the throne to become a chess piece by the Council, so the two sides can be said to be equal.

…*Also,*

With his lord's daughter, the one who had made a Master-Servant Contract being the son of the number one enemy in the Great War, Klaus was especially kind towards Basara to the point where it seemed completely unnatural. Who knows, even the matter of Mio who had no choice but to make a Master-Servant Contract might be taken advantage of; making it into a story where thanks to Wilbert sending troops to put a stop to the Great War, they finally managed to create good relations between the son of the scary [God of War] Jin from the Hero Tribe and the only daughter of the Demon Lord, turning it into another of Wilbert's achievements.

…Both routes are equally bad.

To put it bluntly, all that side wanted are personal benefits – the reason Toujou Basara is unable to accept them.

Absolutely.

“I do understand that both you and Klaus have your own thoughts and plans, and that the subordinates within the Moderates Faction respect the opinions of you higher-ups. However – you all just want to take advantage of Mio, with no shred of consideration to the person in question. In Mio’s moments of great pain, you refused to lend a hand despite knowing about it, and Klaus followed that decision and stood by idly, both sides are the same. And so from my viewpoint, you all are just trash.”

Since the moment they were called to the Demon Realm to till now, Basara had submitted to the humiliation, but he could not take it any longer.

And so he spit it all out:

“I’ll put it bluntly. You guys shouldn’t have called her here, only to just put her aside. You guys had always been ignoring and snubbing her for so long… and now that in order to win against the Current Demon Lord Faction you demand for her presence or for her to hand over her inherited power to you? Stop cracking jokes. That power was given to the one he had not hesitated to separate with by your younger brother to protect herself. Because of her circumstances, Mio has already given up a lot of things; that has to stop.”

Listen carefully.

“We will no longer hold anymore hopes and anticipate anything more from you. So at least, stop taking things away from her. To Mio, that power is a gift from her own father, the only bond between them – you guys basically have no rights or authority to intervene in that!”

Ramusas silently listened to Basara ranting.

…So this is the son of ***that man***

I see. The report had said that he was exiled from the Hero's [Tribe], and now I can understand why. This youth, is really indeed not suited to be a Hero.

…He's far too naive.

Ramusas wanted to let this youth carried away in the heat of the moment know of something called 'Reality'.

"The lives of the Royal Family do not belong to themselves, they live for the people, and die for the people – not even a single person can escape from that blood tie. Since that girl is Wilbert's daughter, she is part of the Royal Family, thus she has a duty to dedicate her life for the people."

"I've said this already, you guys had cast her aside for so long, and yet now you want to use 『Because she is Royalty』 as a reason is just too—"

"—Originally living a civilian's life, and then only to have that life taken away due to the sudden revelation of Royal blood ties; all that is not uncommon."

Additionally – Ramusas continued:

"Although Klaus and I think and do things differently, the both of us have a duty to protect everything here as the ones who stand over the people. Since you guys had walked through the streets in the evening, you should've have already seen it clearly. In reality, you protecting

that girl like that – could just very well turn all that you saw and everyone you have met on the streets into dust, do you understand?"

"Of course I d—"

And Ramusas blunted said to Basara trying to refute:

"Then why are you still being persistent… Then again, you just said that that girl had already given up a lot of things… but she was living happy days in a place unrelated to the political wrangling and fights; that, was thanks to her being Wilbert's daughter. Now we have a need for her who had lived because of Wilbert's death, so he called her back – it was just that her time ran out, and that it was time to say goodbye to the unneeded necessity to acknowledge her bloodline and the disregarding of her responsibility."

" ! ……"

Basara, whose expression, became complicated—

"What you said, was something I cannot completely agree with. You had said, that girl doesn't even know that she doesn't have the qualification, and shouldn't become the Demon Lord—"

And Ramusas resolutely replied:

"That is correct. That girl who had tied a Master-Servant Contract with a little brat like you who had been expelled from the Hero [Tribe], who had let herself become a lowly sensual bondage slave; someone like that has no right to become a Demon Lord, and that's why I wanted her to just obediently hand over Wilbert's power."

With that, the atmosphere suddenly changed. Basara's fighting intent aimed at Ramusas, became even more incisive and cold.

It became blatant killing intent. Then—

"Take it back… If not—"

Basara's right hand went towards Ramusas, and at that moment—

"--That's enough."

Countless numbers of guns were then aimed at Basara's throat, held by the maidservants who had surrounded them. Commanding these maidservants armed with weapons, Lucia came to Ramusas's side—

"It's already difficult enough to overlook the various insults towards Ramusas-sama – if you continue to show disrespect, you shall not be forgiven even if you are Mio-sama and Maria's saviour."

And said coldly.

"……"

Basara remained quiet, and lowered his head. But—

『---------?』

The maidservants holding Basara at gunpoint suddenly received a shock, and their bodies tense.

Rather than decreasing, Basara's killing intent further increased, and then—

"Insults… insults, you said? Those should be my words. Having heard Mio – hearing my own little sister receiving that kind of insult, do you really think this warning is enough to push me over and make me leave it as it is?"

As if ignoring the maidservants surrounding him, light appeared in his right hand.

And his own weapon appeared from the light—

"……It's a shame. I had thought you were smarter than that."

Lucia's eyes narrowed, and just as she was about to give her orders—

"---Kay kay, ~Th-a-t's – e-nou-gh ♪"

An extremely hearty voice cut into the tense atmosphere from the side.

Ramusas's head turned, and found Sheera with Zest behind her standing there,

"Mother-sama…"

Lucia frowned while looking at her.

"Lucia-ya… If you were to start fighting here, Mio[14] and the others would immediately find out, and what would you do if they were to come running over? Even if you are able to incapacitate Basara before they realise, the matter that you argued with him would still come to light. Mio and Yuki both had made the Master-Servant Contract with Basara, so throwing him into the dungeons would be useless."

"Then—"

"—you'll create a barrier, so that they won't realise?"

Sheera smiled at Lucia preparing a retort and said:

"It'll be useless. Doing so will only increase their suspicions, and you won't be able to get Mio's assistance in the end, fine with that?"

"------"

Seeing Lucia becoming unable to retort, Sheera's line of sight turned to Basara and she said:

“Basara, you too should stop making a scene. If you were to start fighting now with Lucia or Ramusas, you won’t be able to make them back down even if you win. It’s great that you love your little sister Mio so much, but if she were to find out you got hurt when you flared up for her sake – she’ll blame herself. Are you still fine with that?”

“……”

Sheera’s words caused Basara to become silent – and he retracted his killing intent soon after, his weapon also disappearing. Seeing this, Sheera smiled and said: [Good Boy.] The maidservants also seemed to relax. Finally, Sheera looked at Ramusas and said:

“Well then, I’ll be bringing Basara away – is it fine?”

“……Do as you like.”

[Okay.] Hearing Ramusas say so, Sheera immediately brought Basara away together with Zest, disappearing into the house[15]

“—Ramusas-sama, I’m very sorry, for my mother’s impertinence.”

Lucia lowered her head and apologised—

“It’s fine… It isn’t that person’s first time creating trouble.”

After that, Ramusas looked out towards the city once again.

Dots of light from the city was spread throughout the city, the stars illuminating the night sky.

Part 4

After being brought away from the platform Ramusas and the others were at by Sheera, Toujou Basara, was then brought to a certain place.

That place, is the bath for male guests' use. He had already taken a bath before coming to the Demon Realm, and right now he wanted to be alone, so he got ready to reject taking a bath, but—

"—Right now you are still mad at Ramusas, do you really think you can fall asleep?"

He was still unable to retort against Sheera. Many things has happened since he entered the Demon Realm, and apart from the nervousness he was expecting, he probably accumulated some stress from things that had went beyond what he was expecting.

Although relaxing to the point where he would put down his guard must be avoided at all costs, he can't really see how much longer they would have to stay in the Demon Realm according to the current situation; being too nervous would only cause his concentration to wane, and things would be dire if he were to not be at his best due to wear when needed.

And thus, Basara finally accepted Sheera's suggestion and got ready to take a bath, but--

"……For some reason, I knew it would turn out like this."

This mother before him is known to be even more mischievous than Maria, due to her following her succubus instincts more than half the time, and so she had followed Basara into the bath as expected. Needless to say, Zest too was also present in the males' bath.

Sitting naked on a stool before Basara, Sheera was trying to suppress her giggles while saying:

"Well, that's of course… Zest[16] is a maidservant serving Basara, while I am her superior? I'm just here to supervise the maid-in-training while she does her duties to ensure that she is serving you well~."

Amazing… She is completely different to Maria who always brags, being able to so easily turn a lie into the truth. Completely masterful.

What if after Maria grows up, what would happen if she turns out just like Sheera? As a touch of anxiety crossed Basara's mind--

"……Well then, here comes your punishment."

Zest said that, and then began washing his back -- with her large matured breasts.

"--Hold it right there! Why are you doing it so naturally!?"

Basara couldn't help but to turn around, only to find a naked foamy Zest say tearfully:

"I-I'm very sorry… I'm still not used to these kind of stuff, did I hurt you?"[17]

"Uhh, no… That wouldn't."

A question: Which male would ever experience pain from being rubbed against a female's breasts? -- that, is one question Basara very much wanted to scream out, but was unable to thanks to Zest seemingly blaming herself.

“Very sorry Basara<Mr.</ref>… Sheera-sama had told me that this was how to help wash a Master, and had even intricately thought me how to do so. This is just my inability to master the art.”

“I understand… It’s fine, and you’re doing it not too bad -- no, the problem does not lie with you at all.”

After hurriedly consoling Zest behind him, he then stared at Sheera who was before him.

“Sheera… Just what in the world did you teach Zest?”

“Ara, Basara, don’t make such a scary face… Is anything wrong?”

Sheera then boasted while smiling:

“I honestly don’t know what else a woman would use when washing a male… I guess that this must be the fault of the differences between the cultures of Demons and Humans.”

“No, no matter how you think about it, it only exists within the culture of you succubi.”

Hurry up and apologise to the other races making up the Demons Race, you loli succubus Mom.

“Anyway, is there something known as 『Local Customs』 in the Human Realm? Over here, of course you would have to accept the customs of our culture, isn’t that right?”

“…Rather than [Local], it feels more like I’ve entered an urn.” [18]

Too deep…[19]

“If you insist, it would be fine if you want to wash yourself…”

Sheera then made an apologetic face,

“But that you mean your maid isn't doing her job… Later I will have to hand Zest a punishment -- the kind that especially painful.”

“……I get it already. Alright, Zest… I’ll be counting on you.”

“Yes…!”

It’s as if Basara did a bad deed, yet Zest exultantly answered and once again began to use her soft breasts to scrub Basara’s body. *Crap…* That softness, is just too damn comfortable, and there are just only subtle differences from those others who would use their breasts to help Basara wash himself. Once again, Basara experienced just how unique the breasts of every person are. If his thinking were to go any further, his own rationality would be in danger -- in order to try to not set the national holiday or prime number[20], Basara tried to scatter his focus.

“…Ah~? Basara seems to be very calm…?”

[How boring]. When Sheera said that, Toujou Basara sighed:

“I’m so very sorry… I’m starting to become used to these kinds of situations.”

“Arara, what shocking words, to be able to get used to a girl scrubbing you with her breasts…? You’ve become a hero at such a young age.[21]”

“Eighty percent of it are the fruits of the labour of your daughter…”

Up to now, both Yuki and Mio who had a Master-Servant Contract with Basara had often used their breasts to scrub his body, thanks to Maria's 'wonderful' suggestions. In order to induce jealousy which would then activate the curse to send them into an aroused state, Maria too would also sometimes demonstrate for them to see; later, Kurumi too was also dragged into this activity -- the remaining twenty percent, belongs to the infirmary teacher Hasegawa who was an exception. It was only Hasegawa, who had not made a Master-Servant Contract with him and had no need to increase battle potential, who was not dragged helpless into this by Maria, and had willingly and voluntarily done that kind of thing with Basara. Just then--

"……Please excuse me."

Saying that from behind his back, Zest's hands which had been embracing Basara's abdomen suddenly descended, slipping under the towel wrapped around his waist.

"H-Hold on, Zest! I can wash that place myself!"

"I-I'm very sorry…!"

Basara's suddenly screamed, causing Zest to hurriedly withdraw her hands from shock, but in that moment--

"--Don't stop and continue, Zest."

A cold voice that could send chills sounded out within the warm bath. Though Basara wanted to retort with a [Stop joking around!] -- he

wasn't able to. Reason being, Sheera was releasing pressure that seemed impossible from her small loli body.

"Even if the other party wants to do it themselves, this is supposed to be a maidservants' duty and reason for existence… **Continue.**"

"Hey --…Haven't I already said that there is no need to?"

Gulping, Basara then managed to force out some resistance, but--

"Aren't you just denying the reason for a maid's existence, Basara, just like saying 『I don't need you following me』? Speaking of which, you seem to be misunderstanding something…"

Sheera continued coldly:

"It was my order for Zest to serve you. Zest is my maidservant, her master is not you, but me; If I order her to wash another male's body, she will…"

And then gave a cold laugh.

Even if she has to help wash those soldiers who would harass her, she will still do so if it is my order. That is the duty of a maid whose duty is to serve people."

Those words caused discomfort within his heart.

"Cracking that kind of joke is just too cruel… If that happens, I wouldn't let Zest continue to be your maidservant."

"But the thing is, you don't have the authority to do so, Basara. You had handed Zest over for us to handle her which is why she is now my maidservant… And so, regarding her all, my word is absolute.

The one who had created this result is you -- the decision you had made at the beginning."

"I…!"

Basara anxiously tried to form a rebuttal -- Basara had told Zest before that if anything happens, she can return to the Toujou Household anytime, as he had judged that she would be able to escape from the Demon Realm with her power. However, those words were just merely for Zest, and wasn't approved by Sheera. Seeing Basara beginning to turn pale--

"How selfish… Ignoring her life and death normally, and then suddenly wishing everyone to be happy when you see her."

Sheera continued while making a caustic[22] smile:

"Don't tell me -- you haven't realised that Zest is isolated and helpless in this city?"

"……"

Basara remained silent, as he did vaguely have that sort of feeling. Other than Sheera or Lucia, he had not seen anyone else in the city speak with Zest; while visiting the city areas, Noel also doesn't seem to be familiar with Zest -- and from Noel's personality, it might perhaps have been that way because of pressure from the higher-ups. For Zest who was part of the Current Demon Lord Faction to find a place for her in the Moderates, it really isn't an easy task. Just then--

"--I would also like to remind you, that Zest's position and situation would also very likely be going downhill some more."

Sheera said something that can't be ignored.

"W-What do you mean?"

"Do you still not get it? No matter if Mio in the end decides to go with the wishes of either Ramusas or Klaus, that final decision will definitely cause resentment in the other party. Adding on that you had just stupidly went to argue with Ramusas saying that you won't accept both sides' wishes, would there still be anyone within the Moderates Faction that would still treat you as one of them?"

If that's the case--

"Even if you all are able to safely make it back to the Human Realm… I believe it wouldn't be difficult to guess who would be the one baring their fangs at you, right? After all, weren't you the ones who asked us to handle Zest?"

"That…"

Basara said in a low voice, groaning. He had never thought about it -- that protesting for Mio would bring about the worsening of Zest's circumstances. As Basara became speechless--

"All these are the results of the decisions you guys have made. The you right now, have no authority at all to stop Zest from doing anything… If you still want Zest to listen and obey you no matter what, and not let her be in danger of being tarnished by someone she wants to--

Sheera giggled some more, and then continued:

“Basara -- you must become her master, make her into a thing of yours.”

“I, become Zest’s master…?”

Basara turned to look at Zest, only to see Zest slowly raise her lowered head, her eyes meeting with Basara’s. There was no signs of rejecting Basara at all in her eyes -- but rather, it was as if hoping what Sheera said will turn into reality. However--

“Isn’t the Master-Servant Contract magic only usable on the night of a full moon…? There’s still a very long time before the next full moon comes.”

“Ara… So in the end you are not opposed to making a Master-Servant Contract with Zest?”

“Only if -- Zest herself agrees to it, then I will have no opposition.”

Basara directly gave his affirmation to Sheera, because the decision to make a Master-Servant Contract with Zest -- that decision, was already made long ago in his heart, from before Basara entered the Demon Realm.”

“------”

At those words, Zest stared at him in shock. Then--

“Ara, then I would say that there’s no problems at all.”

Sheera continued:

“The restriction of a full moon, only exists when the magic is used in the Human Realm… The Master-Servant Contract is pretty

commonplace within the Demon Realm, so it can be used anytime. Since everyone already knows that I'm casual, bold, and unconstrained, even Ramusas and Klaus likely wouldn't say anything if I were to use the Master-Servant magic to make you Zest's master."

"……I see."

With Sheera's explanation, Basara murmured his understanding of that, and also understood why Sheera's attitude towards him had changed suddenly. Zest's position and circumstances, must be in a much bigger danger than what Basara's had thought. That's why--

…Is this the only chance?

Right now -- Basara is standing at the intersection to decide if he really has the power to be able to protect Zest, but the situation isn't really 「No Problems at all」 like Sheera said.

"Zest… Let me ask you first, are you really willing to have a Master-Servant Contract with me?"

Thus, Basara ask Zest who was before him.

"T-This isn't something that can be selfishly decided by me alone, I would still need the approval of Mio-sama and the others."

Towards Zest who replied with her head lowered while biting her lower lip, Toujou Basara continued:

"--I have already obtained their approval for this."

"Eh--! …?"

Zest raised her head from the shock.

“We have already discussed this matter before we had come here. If it was deemed that there is a need to, I will bring you back together with me -- and they gave their approval.”

Also--

“*They* -- of course includes Mio.”

Mio-sama she…? …Is it - really the truth?”

Basara then put on a smile, and said to the dumbfounded Zest:

“It’s the truth. It exactly because that’s the kind of person she is, that’s become the reason why I will protect her no matter what… So if you are willing to, I hope that you can help me in protecting her -- protecting my proud and arrogant little sister, Zest.”

Please.

“If you are willing to help me in protecting her… I too will also protect you with my all.”

Finishing, Toujou Basara gazed at Zest sincerely. After a long period of silence--

“……I refuse.”

Basara heard it -- Zest’s extremely soft voice saying out her rejection.

Thus, [I see], those words came to Basara’s mouth -- but they never made it out of his mouth.

Reason being, Zest hasn’t finished speaking. Those are, her feelings that have always been suppressed up till now.

“I too want to protect Mio-sama, but… I do not want Basara to be protecting me, or else it would make the Master-Servant Contract meaningless. I wish to become your maidservant, to truly become your subordinate… to live for you only, and go through happy and tough times together.”

“Zest…”

Zest poured out her own thoughts, and after Basara said her name--

“Please, Basara… Please allow me to remain by your side forever!”

She pressed herself against Basara’s chest.

To which Basara whispered into her ear: [Yes.] -- his own choice.

“……Sheera, looks like I’ll be troubling you once again.”

The moment he finished his sentence, a magic circle opened up beneath them on the bath’s floor.

In order to let Basara and Zest make the Master-Servant Contract.

“--Thank goodness that the efforts I spent on preparing these won’t go to waste.”

As if knowing that this would happen, that small young and glamorous succubus smiled, and said:

“If you want it to be like Mio’s and Yuki’s, the Contract would need to be made through a succubus’s power.”

And at the same time, a magic circle appeared on the back of Basara’s hand.

After that -- there was no need to say[23] what came after that.

”------“ “------“

Basara stretched his right hand towards Zest, who respectfully kneeled and received the palm -- and lightly kissed the magic circle.

Basara and Zest were then immediately enveloped by the light indicating that the Contract has been completed.

…With that…

Zest is now finally Basara’s subordinate, but for the question of whether is he able to be able to protect Zest, it still depended on whether his good fortune will last. Feeling the weight of the responsibility on him increasing, Basara raised Zest’s hand to aid her in standing up. It was then--

“Ya--Fuaaaahhhhh!”

Zest gave a cutesy scream, and limply remained attached to Basara. Taking a closer look, the collar-like markings on Zest’s throat showing the activation of the curse could be seen.

The unbelievable amounts of pleasure, caused Zest’s whole body to tremble while she was in Basara’s arms.

…S-So this is…

Although it was somewhat painful, the pleasure that was stronger continued flowing out from the depths of Zest’s body. Within the fresh numbness and aches, Zest is now currently experiencing her indescribable first experience. This sweetness that she is experiencing

right now -- so this is the happiness that belongs solely to women. Just then--

“W-Why…? Didn’t making the Contract go smoothly?”

Basara had questions, while holding Zest within his arms. This development seemed exactly just like the developments that happened during the contract making with both Yuki and Mio. However, Zest had indeed kissed that magic circle before it disappeared unlike Mio and Yuki -- in fact, Zest herself too doesn’t know why things had turned out like this.

“Ara… So it turned out like this.”

Apparently this was also beyond what Sheera had expected.

“I would say that this would be that although you said that there’s no problem, deep within Zest’s heart, she is worried that she would cause you unneeded trouble now that she’s your subordinate, which had activated the curse.”

“Ah--…?”

The reason why Zest harboured guilt, turned Basara speechless.

“ ! …I-I’m very very sorry…I have no intention of doubting your words… Aaaoo!”

Although she was on the verge of crying, Zest still continued trying to quell the anger she thought Basara must be feeling while gasping heavily.

“Basara-ya, there’s something that I have to reveal… Although my current power is far from the levels during my prime, my succubus powers are still stronger than Maria’s. So, the effects of the aphrodisiac curse are very likely to be much stronger than that of Yuki’s and Mio’s.”

“Yes, I can see that!”

Basara then flared up while hugging Zest in his arms.

“Don’t panic… Zest’s powers are above Mio and the others, and the guilt she has probably isn’t really deep, so she’ll probably be able to take it longer than them.”

“Is that supposed to be consolation? Anyway, thanks for providing that piece of information.”

Basara sighed, and laid Zest on the floor of the bath.

“ ! …Basa-ra…?”

As this was her first time experiencing pleasure, Zest had no idea how she should take it, so she could only just look at Basara in a daze.

“Zest, please bear with it a little longer. I will soon make you yield, and free you.”

Thus -- Toujou Basara said:

“Accept me -- as your Master.”

Those words are just what Zest wanted to hear -- so, despite the overwhelming pleasure shaking her body--

"……Yes, Master Basara!"

Zest gave a small smile and stretched out her hands, and said from the very bottom of her heart:

"Zest is Master Basara's maidservant… Please make everyone remember that clearly!"

And so Basara nodded -- and silently, his hands went towards Zest's breasts.

…Ah…

Not just Zolgear, that body part which no male has ever touched before -- in those days after leaving Basara side, those days where her endless yearning for him and dreaming about being at his mercy caused changes within her body, turning her breasts into an alluring size. That very evening, when those very breasts were about to be encroached on by the city guards, Basara had stopped them which meant that he had protected her chastity -- that was the first time Basara had protected her.

…Ah ha…

Hence, with the moment of Basara finally caressing those breasts of hers finally arriving, Zest's heart was beating in happiness. Just seeing his hand getting closer and closer -- raised her desires and anticipation higher and higher.

And then, Basara began caress those plump and obscene breasts of hers -- and it was in that very moment--

"----……..!"

The aftermath of her breasts being caressed for the first time, was a body-shaking female climax. It was then, Zest's subjugation had begun.

Her eyes rolling and her memories now in short bits and pieces, Zest then slowly regained her normal vision, and upon seeing Basara still at her side--

…How moving, Master Basara and I are finally…!

--In the past, Zest had witnessed the scene where Basara and Yuki made the Master-Servant Contract, and also the scene where Basara, Yuki, Mio and Maria had taken a bath together in the Toujou Residences' bathroom. Back then, she had secretly decided. That if she were to one day be subjugated by Basara, she wanted it to happen in a bathroom. That very wish had now come true, and Zest kept shouting Basara's name, wanting to share the happiness she felt; however, since Basara wanted to subjugate Zest as soon as possible, the caresses that were originally gentle quickly became stronger--

"Aahh! Yaaah! Fuuaa-aahhaaa…. Yaa-aaaahh!
…Haaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh♥"

The caresses on Zest's breasts very quickly turned wild, allowing room for only gasps and the pleasure filling up every pore of her body, her burning desires eventually turned her brown-coloured flesh into a wet and bright lewd colour.

And as if wanting to express the pleasure she felt, the twisting and quivering of her body continued, and she let out gasps of lewdness.

…My goodness… My breasts has already become so salacious[24]*…*

Basara's fingers dug into the flesh, rapidly kneading Zest's breasts into various lewd shapes -- emphasising its softness to none other than Zest herself.

Lewd… The fact that Basara is having his way with her breasts, as well as the pleasure resulted from that, are lewd. Being seen by Basara in this state, further intensified the pleasant feeling within her. Soon, Zest saw the tips of her breasts begin to get excited from the pleasure, swelling up and becoming hard. As her breasts melted into pleasure, that very part became harder and harder.

As Basara kneaded Zest's breasts, those extremely sensitive tips, were then rubbed in between his thumb and forefinger. It was in that very moment--

"Ya-- Fuuaaaaaahhhhhhhhh♥"

Another orgasm at a level where the first one could never compare to, caused Zest's body to spasm; arching her back and sticking out her butt, her waist to hips were raised uncontrollably. Basara's right hand then went around Zest's waist, and lifted her up. By the time she felt a floating sensation, Basara was already face to face with her straddling his crotch.

By the time she realised that, one of tips of her breasts were already being sucked in his mouth.

"Ah--Aahh…!"

Although something happened and her thoughts hadn't caught up to what she was feeling, Zest's femininity told her that she too also needed to start moving. And so, Zest's hands went around Basara's neck, and she put some force into the legs around his waist -- at the same time, Basara also disappeared from her sights. All of a sudden, she felt some unrest from the thought that he might have cast her aside.

But that was wrong, as Basara was still in front of her.

--It was the mirror on the ceiling of the bath that had confirmed that fact.

While orgasming, Zest's eyes then met with the her in that mirror.

…This is, me…?

What the reflection of the mirror showed, is not the cold and frosty Zest she was in the past, but gasping from the tremendous climaxes with a lewd smile -- it was just simply a girl intoxicated in pleasure.

--However, she didn't mind, just how lewd her own expression is. Compared to this, Basara sucking her breasts and his hands relentlessly kneading her butt -- the pleasure brought about from those sensations are much more important.

"Ya,aahh… Ah! W-Why…is, my body, getting hotter and, hotter… Fuaahhh!"

Despite climaxing continuously, the curse showed no signs of going away. Her upper body arching to its limit again due to another

orgasm, what vision imperceptibly[25]became that of what is behind her now.

…Ah…

Over there in her sights, is Sheera. She was looking at the scene of Zest lewdly orgasming, with a coquettish[26] smile that didn't match her young appearance; her lips seemed have said something and after fidgeting a bit, she then went towards the entrance of the bath.

…Sheera-sama…?

Is she going to leave before witnessing the end of Zest being subjugated by Basara? With her awareness being broken up by the waves of pleasure, Zest couldn't understand what Sheera had just said, it was as if like the strong sensations had paralysed her sense of hearing. However -- Zest found out the answers very quickly. Gripping her shoulders, Basara then pulled her towards him, making her sit up straight.

After that, the lips of Basara's mouth in front of Zest's eyes started moving.

"……?"

Zest didn't know how to read lips.

But she was able to forcibly make out the words [I'm] and [ear].

After that -- Basara's lips began to slowly near her ear.

…Master Basara, are you…?

Basara had already kneaded her breasts and butt out of proportions, so in that moment, she couldn't understand just what Basara was going to do.

And in the next moment, Zest realised a truth and an answer.

It seems that the ears are full of erogenous zones -- and that, **that area** is her weak spot.

Part 5

"…Um, Basara, are you alright?"

Maidservant Noel shouted out at the large bath for male guests' use.

She had been asked by Mio and the other to check on Basara since he still hasn't returned for a long time after entering the bath.

The basket in the changing room contained not only Basara's clothes, but also Zest's and Sheera's clothes.

They all are indeed inside the bath, but could the reason why they were taking so long--

--Did they faint in the bath from soaking too long?

Should I go inside to check? As Noel became indecisive--

『---------- ♥』

Zest's scream came from inside the bath.

" ! --A-Are you alright…--!"

Rushing into the bathing area not knowing what happened -- she then saw it.

The scene of Zest's ear in Basara's mouth, and Zest experiencing a massive climax. Her waist and hips trembled violently, shaking her large pleasure-filled breasts about.

"…Ah…"

Noel's legs became weak, and she collapsed onto the floor. Just then--

"--My my, this girl really knows how to pick a great time to come."

A giggling voice came from her side, and a pair of hands covered her eyes from behind her. As if her thoughts were seen through, she then heard someone whispering into her ear.

『However, it would be for the best if you forget what you saw here. You are to immediately return to the room Mio and the others are and tell them that Basara will not be returning tonight and to not worry -- do you understand? 』

"……Yes."

Rapidly nodding her head, Noel then followed the instructions and left the bath.

To head towards the room Mio and the rest are in -- and to tell them that Basara will not be returning for the night.

After successfully sending Noel off,

"Alright… No one will be coming in to disturb us anymore."

Sheera giggled, and--

"…Um, Sheera."

"Basara said while hugging Zest:

"You were right, about Zest's weak spot being her ear… Thank you."

On the neck area of Zest who had already lost consciousness after Basara bit her ear, the markings of the curse has already vanished. However--

"Ara, Basara… Isn't it too early to be thanking me?"

"What do you mean…?"

Sheera then said to Basara who began to feel doubt:

"What you did just now, was merely to use pleasure to make Zest unconscious, a measure used in emergencies. Didn't she activate the curse due to being worried over causing you problems as your subordinate? Unless you managed to make her really feel 『I am not causing trouble for Master Basara』 and 『I am able to give my assistance to Master Basara』, the curse will activate again when she regains consciousness and becomes stable."

"Then -- what I did just now--"

"Don't worry… Your efforts have not gone to waste."

Sheera then came to where the two of them were, and touched Zest's cheeks--

"Alright, Zest… Time to wake up."

After gently saying that, Zest then opened her eyes slowly.

"……Ah…Sheera-sama…I…"

"Do you remember? You had fainted partway while you were serving Basara, so now it's for the best if you continue… Do you not want to be a bother to Basara? Then you better assist him well, and show that to him."

"Master Basara… A bother…?"

Saying so with confusion in her eyes, the markings then appeared once more on her throat.

"Sheera, you…?"

Seeing the curse of the Master-Servant Contract activating and thus started to panic, Sheera raised her hand to stop Basara and said:

"Don't worry… Right now Zest is calm from the tremendous climaxes she had since her memories aren't clear, so her guilt isn't that strong. What you have to do now, is to help her out from this situation. The curse of the Master-Servant Contract has the purpose of reminding the subordinate to be loyal to the Master, so no matter how muddled her memories are, she would still remember the reason for the activation of the curse. Hence, before she starts blaming herself when she completely regains her calm, you have to drill into her the knowledge that her presence and existence will not be harmful but beneficial to you, to give her the confidence to remain by your side as your subordinate."

After all--

“The tipsy state she is in right now will make it easy for her to reveal her true thoughts. If you were to accomplish that, the curse will no longer activate when she regains her calm after that.”

That is the only way to make Zest to be able to continue living as Basara’s subordinate.

“ ! ……--I understand.”

Finally, Basara gave his agreement after thinking over it, and so--

“Come, Zest… hurry up and serve Basara, and prove that you are able to help him.”[27]

“…Yes…”

“To be able to help him, you must be able to do some meaningful things to be able to have pride in being his subordinate… So, hurry up and go serve Basara, he’s waiting for you.”[28]

Zest nodded, and then wrapped her hands around Bsara’s neck.

“Master Basara--…”

With a confused and alluring smile, she then pressed against Basara’s lips, with her own lips.

Basking in the sweet warmth welling up within her in the aftertaste of her climaxes, Zest kissed Basara.

Because as Basara’s subordinate, Zest felt that she must be willing to sacrifice her all for him.

“Nn… Oi, Zest… Mnn?”

Zest drunkenly kissed the misunderstanding Basara even stronger, and just then--

“Basara, you should just let Zest do as she please… She had given up her first kiss to you since she thought that will make you happy, so how could you as the master to reciprocate her feelings?”

After Sheera said that as if scolding him--

“----!”

Basara’s body twitched, and he then pulled Zest into his arms.

Then -- the time to turn them into true Master and Subordinate, began, like as if they were lovers.

--However, it began with just Zest one-sidedly serving Basara.

Despite Zest using her obscene and lewd breasts to continually scrub Basara’s body, he showed no resistance at all. However, this made Zest worried.

「…Master Basara, please use my body to tell me, just what do I have to do in order to satisfy you.」

Giving Basara a kiss as if sending a plea, it appeared that her thoughts had reached Basara’s heart. He then began making demands for her – from that moment onwards, Zest began to experience countless numbers of orgasms.

Nibbling her ear while massaging her breast, and her butt – all these made Zest become surprised at just how easily she can be

overwhelmed by pleasure, which had caused her to expose her intoxicated and drunk state induced by her orgasms to Basara.

In that regard[29], Zest was not an exception. Reason being that no matter how embarrassed the person became, it will still be insignificant against the bliss and pleasure she experienced. Just as the minute hand of the clock embedded into the wall of the bath finished one round—

"Haah… Nn, chii, chiiiii… Aaahh! Master Basara… Nnnnfff…lyaaaa…"

The kiss between Zest and Basara, basically turned into intense intertwining of tongues and pooling of saliva.

Hands massaging her breasts from behind her back, Zest had twisted her body back to kiss – although the posture brought about some discomfort, it was completely insignificant against the tremendous intense bliss and pleasure Basara gave her. Zest's instincts as a woman were still steadily rising, plunging her into madness. With all signs of morality and discipline and self-control gone from her eyes—

"Master Basara, suck me more… please make Zest's breasts become as sensitive as Mio-sama's…"

Zest shook her breasts around like a spoiled child, to which Basara immediately granted her request. Making Zest sit on his thighs facing him, he began kneading her butt with his hands and latched his lips onto that pair stiff tips of her breasts, and loudly sucked it in. Faced with a simultaneous pincer attack—

“Yaah! Aahh… Fuuu! Nnnhh… Nn-nnuu… Nnnaaaa♥”

Zest wriggled around on his thighs, squirming around intoxicatedly, drunk on the pleasure bestowed on her by her Master’s forceful caresses. Since not long ago, something deep within her lower abdomen has already melted into heat, as if it was already ready to cause her to burn up anytime; her wet pleasure-drenched sensitive spot had already begun to pour out lewd juices, causing those juices to continuously flow down her thighs.

She was twerking her hips on a male’s thighs – as if competing for the top contender for the world’s most lewd lap dance. Zest’s lowered sight caught on to just how crazily she was moving her hips about, and it was then she noticed – Basara had also *grown up* due to a male’s reaction.

…Master Basara, because of me, you had already become so…

For someone like her to be able to make Basara become this excited – this fact, made Zest with her already-very-sensitive body even more excited; with her blazing flames of passion, large amounts of saliva suddenly built-up in her mouth.

After swallowing that saliva back down in one gulp—

“Master Basara… Ah…”

Zest slowly slipped down off Basara’s thighs, and knelt down before his waist.

A subordinate who only cared about her own indulgence in pleasure ad neglected her master’s satisfaction has got no worth to exist. That

was the reason why she then slowly raised her eyes to look at Basara, to make a request to Basara with her wet eyes.

Basara did not say anything—

"--------"

And gently stroked her head with his hand with a calm expression[30] on his face.

That was enough. Even without any words, that was enough to let Zest understand that Basara has given her his clearance.

--Thus using her mouth, Zest began to serve Basara's private area.

And what happened after that, was just ecstatic – causing Zest to close her eyes, and gathered all of her consciousness into her mouth and tongue that was being used to serve Basara. Later after that—

"…-----Eh?"

Zest opened her eyes, and realised that both she and Basara were lying on the floor of the bath with their legs entangled together.

The two of them were also stark naked. Basara's face was buried within Zest's breasts, breathing normally.

Just what exactly happened? – Zest was of course stunned[31], and just then—

"—Are you awake, Zest?"

A very leisurely voice came over to her. Turning around to look, she saw Sheera sitting at the edge of the bath.

“Sheera-sama, I…”

“You probably should still remember – no matter how intoxicated with pleasure you’ve become, you will still definitely remember the situation when the curse of the Master-Servant Contract activated.”

“……Ah.”

Those words vividly awakened Zest’s memories from not too long ago. Although Basara’s *male pheromones*[32] made her feel dizzy, the fact that she currently was still latched onto Basara’s *avatar*[33]still remains.

『Nnhh… Nnfuu, fuuu, lyuu, chuu… Master Basara♥Hapuuf… Ann, chuu…nnn… Haafff, chuu…Puuuff…yeuu…nnaa… Ah-pchh…』 [34]

Using her tongue to carefully entangle it, Zest intricately served it with her mouth, and Basara’s stiff *avatar* also twitched excitedly in her mouth – in order to satisfy Basara even more, the intoxicated Zest decided to go with trial and error, to search for a way that Basara would like.

『Nnn… Aahh… Aaoo, Master, Basara… Haahh… Aaahh… Fuahh♥』

That’s right – not only using her mouth, Zest also utilised her large full breasts later on; completely enveloping Basara’s *avatar*, she had also completely immersed herself into serving Basara with her own breasts.

It was different from when Basara sucked on them – with the effects of friction and other things due to Zest’s breasts gripping onto it, lewd sounds sounded out with every single movement her breasts made.

The joy from serving Basara, combined with the immorality from wantonly[35] rubbing *it* with her breasts, inextricably[36]raised Zest's lust even higher.

"I--…"

Zest finally remembered the ecstasy she had felt when she and Basara and finally met again. She then forcefully pushed the Basara attempting to *fire* onto her breasts to the floor of the bath, and after clasping her arms around his waist, she pushed herself against him – plunging Basara's *avatar* into her mouth once again.

--After that, that major historical event replayed itself vividly in Zest's mind.

Making her remember – the events of Basara's hot torrents[37] flooding her, as well as--

(…Master Basara, Master Basara, Master Basara…♥)

Her swallowing it all, while calling his name countless times in her heart. With every movement she had made with her head, that viscous pleasure had poured even more of itself into her body – just that was already more than enough to bring her up to a continuous string of climaxes, plunging her whole body into overwhelming bliss, causing every single part of her to shake. At the end, as all of **that** flowed past Zest's throat--

"…Ah…"

Remembering what had happened after that, a cold chill suddenly assaulted her body.

"—have you remembered it?"

As if seeing through Zest's emotions, Sheera smiled and said:

"You were very fierce and abrupt when you lost yourself in playing… As if this being your first time isn't enough, you had kept harassing Basara non-stop – doing *it* three times with your mouth, and two times with your breasts in between *that* – I can see that you have a really bright future ahead of you. Basara must have already accumulated a lot of *damage* – be thankful that you have such a strong master, okay?"

"……Yes."

While embarrassed to the point of wanting to make herself disappear, Zest nodded. Even if it was while being plunged into total bliss, lusting for Basara like she had just did is just too embarrassing for her to face. But she still remembered with every eruption[38] Basara had made on Zest's breasts and in her mouth, he would also cry out her name.

To show that he also wanted her[39]. That's why--

"……"

Zest felt her neck – there were no signs of the collar markings of the Master-Servant Contract's curse, as well as any lingering signs of the sweet aphrodisiac. In other words, that is the best evidence to show that she had served him well and had fulfilled her responsibility of serving Basara – that's why, she could no longer hold **it** back.

Before the gap in her memories, what she had whispered while her legs and Basara's were entangled:

"…I really did it. I finally became Master Basara's subordinate – and family."

Cuddling against the sleeping face of her very much cherished Basara, Zest whispered it again. Then--

"Congratulations on being reborn, Zest… As a precaution, please answer my question first."

Sheera then continued:

"—towards becoming Basara's subordinate and being by his side, do you still harbour any doubt?"

[None at all.] While trying to hold back her tears, Zest shook her head to answer her former master's question.

With no more guilt towards becoming Basara's subordinate – all that's left in her is purely bliss.

Translator Notes and References

1. Jump up↑ 名目: used to describe a [standard]. E.g. the nominal currency exchange rate
2. Jump up↑ a nobleman ranking above a count and below a duke.
3. Jump up↑ A more respectful version of calling someone is used here
4. Jump up↑ kill
5. Jump up↑ a gesture expressing deferential respect, such as a bow or curtsy
6. Jump up↑ Miss Yuki is used here, like the many places in the text
7. Jump up↑ the one where people stretch their backs after waking up in the morning
8. Jump up↑ a confused heap; an extremely confused, complicated, or embarrassing situation
9. Jump up↑ most likely a reference to F.A.P. – [F]or [A]cademic [P]urposes; masturbation material search
10. Jump up↑ the aforementioned material
11. Jump up↑ underarms / armpit
12. Jump up↑ Miss Noel
13. Jump up↑ Mr. Klaus

14. Jump up↑ [Chinese]little sis, she refers to Basara and the rest like her little siblings, like the previous chapters

15. Jump up↑ house/castle

16. Jump up↑ calling Zest her imouto

17. Jump up↑ cause you pain?

18. Jump up↑ Rather than customs of a community, it seems more like ones that of a cult

19. Jump up↑ It's starting to get spiritual

20. Jump up↑ Chinese language puns, referring to an erection

21. Jump up↑ Not the real hero in this story. The Hero of Youths, one who is able to 'control' his own libido

22. Jump up↑ sarcastic in a scathing and bitter way

23. Jump up↑ had the urge to use the word [narrate] instead

24. Jump up↑ having or conveying undue or indecent interest in sexual matters

25. Jump up↑ so slight, gradual, or subtle as not to be perceived

26. Jump up↑ behaving in such a way as to suggest a playful sexual attraction; flirtatious

27. Jump up↑ Sheera's line

28. Jump up↑ Sheera's line too

29. Jump up↑ the revelation of that state in the previous paragraph

30. Jump up↑ was supposed to be [peaceful expression], but it didn't seem to fit

31. Jump up↑ stunned/shocked

32. Jump up↑ referring to something that has been discharged

33. Jump up↑ male private part

34. Jump up↑ various and lots of sound effect text that I have no idea how to put into English. Basically, I tried partially improvising here, so accuracy can't be guaranteed

35. Jump up↑ sexually lawless or unrestrained; loose; lascivious; lewd: wanton behavior

36. Jump up↑ incapable of being disentangled, undone, loosed, or solved

37. Jump up↑ ejaculate; what comes out during ejaculation

38. Jump up↑ ejaculation

39. Jump up↑ [lusted for her] is the exact translation, but might not have been the best to use. Double meaning here: [To lust for her] and [To accept her as a subordinate/servant]

Chapter 4 - In the Wind Blowing Through the Battlefield

Part 1

Here, is a place is filled with tranquillity.

Built on the hill behind Vereda City – this wide area that was directly cut from the hill, is the Demon Lord Wilbert's Temple.

--Currently, Nonaka Yuki is visiting the resting place of this great Demon Lord's soul.

Of course, she wasn't alone – Yuki was accompanying for this journey.

The one beside her was also accompanying to this place, Kurumi.

And before Yuki's eyes was yet another person. Before the large tombstone of Wilbert, was a young girl firmly raising her head – Mio.

「――――――」

From when they arrived here, it already has been thirty minutes, yet Mio remained standing there silently all this time. However―

―No matter how long she wants to stay, let her.

This was Mio's first time coming to her biological father's grave to pay her tributes. Since Yuki completely understood Mio's history and current situation, she knew clearly that Mio now must have many different complex emotions within her.

That's why – even though she couldn't get a reply, there must be a lot she wants to say to Wilbert. Kurumi by her side also understood that, and also waited with no complaints with Yuki. Not long after—

"……Thank you, I'm fine now."

After Mio said that, she returned back to Yuki and Kurumi's sides with her back facing Wilbert's tombstone.

"…Are you feeling better?"

Yuki's question made Mio give a slight bitter smile.

"I don't know~. I have never ever seen him, and this is only his grave. Even if you tell me that the one in there is my biological father, I won't feel anything… I'm fickle, right?"

"No, I feel that that's normal."

With her two hands behind her head, Kurumi said while looking at Wilbert's tombstone:

"I guess it won't be normal for a person to be crying a lot when seeing the tombstone of a father that person has never seen before, it'll be as if it was purely acting."

"……Umn, you're right."

Thank you – saying that, Mio's bitter smile became deeper. She might be wanting to seem as if nothing happened – but her expression showed her loneliness.

"……" " ? What's wrong, Yuki?"

Yuki's gaze caused Mio to ask, and her expression returned to one that Yuki and Kurumi were familiar with. Hence, Yuki replied: [Nothing].

…I guess it's fine even if she's trying to be brave.

To that aspect of Mio, Yuki frankly felt admiration. Ever since they were born, Yuki and the others had received a Hero's education as if it was natural and they were clear about their mission; but where Mio had started from was completely different – she had lived a normal person's life, and treated herself as a normal young girl.

But one day, both her parents were killed – and thus learned that she was not a human but the Demon Lord's daughter. But yet this young girl called Naruse Mio, basically point fingers of blame or held any hate towards anyone; no matter how frustrated, pained, or lost she became – she continued going forward; even if she had come to the Demon Realm to face her origins, that point still didn't change.

"Right… Since we have already come here, are you clearer on what you plan to do?"

"…No. I thought a lot about it, but nothing came out of it yet."

Mio shook her head while saying that.

--The moment Mio resolved herself on her decision, a chain of irreversible events would definitely occur.

Hence – even after coming to the Demon Realm for three days, she still hadn't decided. As it would affect only just Mio, implicating Basara and the others, it also involved the future of the Demon Realm

as a whole, so being hesitant about it was naturally unavoidable. Also—

…The reason Mio is hesitant, is because of that man…

In Nonaka Yuki's mind, the current leader of the Moderates Faction Ramusas surfaced. Nobody knows just what he was planning; Klaus appeared every day to speak with Mio, and Ramusas persistently rejected meeting with Mio these three days.

Without being able to meet with both sides, a suitable decision of course can't be made. In truth – before Mio had come to the Demon Realm, she had already made it clear to Yuki and the others that she had no intention at all of becoming the new Demon Lord. So going by the current situation, the only options would be complying with Ramusas's request, to have the power handed over to the Moderates Faction, or to return to the Human Realm as they are now. And since Ramusas rejected meeting with Mio, the choice they should make was obvious.

…But still,

The reason Mio was so hesitant, was that she was worried that she might fall into some dangerous circumstances if she were to reject the Moderates Faction's request. The reason she was still able to live despite the threat of the Current Demon Lord faction is all Maria's credit – in other words a gift from the Moderates Faction. Despite having defeated Zolgear after so much trouble, the Current Demon Lord Faction is still very well and healthy, so receiving an attacking anytime would be normal.

Under these conditions, she would be helpless if she were to reject the Moderates Faction's request. As the Heroes see Mio as a Demon, they would see the Current Demon Lord attacking her as an internal strife, thus only remaining on the sidelines.

…Then again,

If they were to become the enemies of the Moderates Faction, Maria would be faced with a dilemma. Even if Maria had said that she was prepared to leave the Moderates Faction if necessary and move together with Mio; still, after seeing Maria's tears after learning of Sheera's safety and being free from Zolgear's coercion, she won't be able to agree to Maria leaving behind her family's feelings. Having once lost her family – Mio who was unable to escape her pain prior to meeting Basara, definitely does not hope for Maria to go through the same pain.Besides—

…Ever since before we came to the Demon Realm, Basara has always been very worried about Zest.

And now, there is no need to be so worried for her already. Because on the night they had come to the Demon Realm, Zest had made the Master-Servant Contract with Basara under Sheera's proposal, so right now her position is similar to Mio and Yuki. If they were to speak of complaints to Basara making the Master-Servant Contract with the former enemy Zest, of course there would be some—

…However,

Before everyone came to the Demon Realm, Basara had said that if there was a need, they might return together with Zest; so after

finding out about their Master-Servant Contract, the waves of complaints Yuki and the others had were small – except for the unsatisfied Kurumi.

…But,

Basara had accepted Mio who had lied to him, and had forgiven Maria who had once assisted Zolgear. Someone like that choosing to accept Zest, could be said was something to be expected. Mio and Maria's positions were quite similar to Zest, so they were in no position to say anything.

As for Yuki – it was because Basara was someone who was so kind and wished to protect her who was important to him, that she became attracted to him. Right now, Zest probably was also enchanted by Basara, and thinking about the needs for the future, being able to have some like Zest who could fight so well put her mind at ease.

Since – she had learned of it afterwards, the reason Basara had made the Master-Servant Contract with Basara was that Basara had Ramusas had almost entered into an explosive situation with each other, which also caused his absence back then. With opposition from the leader of the Moderates Faction which limited Basara's actions with forbidding entry to this Wilbert's temple, he had to stay behind in the city together with Zest and Maria.

Speaking of which, no matter what their reason for going against each other was, Yuki and Kurumi how were Heroes had managed to get permission to enter this temple while Basara who was once a Hero was denied permission, so they really can't understand on what basis

they were making their decisions from. No matter what – even they themselves don't have complete freedom with their actions, with Lucia and Klaus each sending a maidservant who were waiting outside monitoring them. But even then—

"That person called Ramusas… just what is he even thinking?"

Returning on the dark outdoor passage, Kurumi said while walking in front of Yuki and Mio.

"If that old man called Klaus still wants to buy time now, it wouldn't be difficult to understand…"

"……Unn." "……."

Mio nodded at Kurumi's words, while Yuki expressed her agreement while remaining silent. It was because of Klaus's side who was pushing for Mio to become the new Demon Lord, who was causing Mo to want to stay longer in the Demon Realm, deepening her feelings towards the Moderates Faction – as well as to Wilbert and Vereda's civilians, and obtain victory from that; Ramusas who wanted to extract Wilbert's power from Mio, probably wants to make a quick decisive end to the war.

…Just what is that man…?

From the viewpoint of the surrounding people, this situation disadvantageous to Ramusas, was all completely his own fault. So, could it be that he has got some ulterior motives that had not been seen by anyone else yet?

「———————」

As Yuki began to harbour some unexplainable uneasiness, while they were still within a passageway,

The surface of the temple, began shaking together with the atmosphere.

"—Earthquake?"

"Run! –To outside!"

The three of them began running.

--This temple was completely carved out, just like its passageways.

While the inside of the temple had a barrier to prevent the use of magic to prevent damage by vandals and the surrounding areas had something similar set up to prevent damage due to disasters, the tunnels and passageways might have a different story to tell. If they were to be blocked from the exit by the rubble if the ceiling collapses, they won't be able to escape in this place where they were unable to use magic – hence, the three of them ran through the passages without even taking time to draw a breath,

Even if the trembles were to stop, they had no way to know if it would get stronger or weaker if it started again. So in order to try to preserve their lives in this kind of situation where anything could happen anytime, they had to leave this temple as soon as possible.

"—I see the exit!"

With Kurumi's shout, rays of light from the outside came into their view – and immediately after, the three of them left the passageways. Firstly, they had to confirm the current situation.

“—you two, are you fine!?”

Mio asked aloud. The question was not directed to Yuki and Kurumi, but the maidservants who had followed them. While the two of them who were waiting for them to return were fine—

『……』

They gave to reactions at all to Mio’s concern.

They only stood there, not moving at all while looking towards the inside of Vereda City from the top of the Hill. And in the next moment, they then saw what the maidservants were seeing after following their line of sight.

“That is-- ……”

The city wall was broken through, and enemies were storming into the city.

However, those maids wouldn’t be stupidly standing there if it was just simply an attack from the enemy. They would’ve at least entered the temple to inform them of the emergency situation and helped Mio to get to safety.

Then – just what could have caused them to forget even that? The answer, was in the scene Yuki and the other were currently seeing. Even though the distance between the hill and the urban areas of the city was as big as Vereda City itself, they could clearly see the figures of the [Enemy] invaders.

“…Just what is that—“

Beside Kurumi, Yuki muttered, at a loss. Something which was incredibly unbelievable, was currently happening before her eyes.

The figures of three giant colossus, invaded into Vereda.

Part 2

There was a person, who was currently watching the chaotic situation in Vereda.

Standing on one of the shoulders of the giant spirit[1], looking down at the people screaming and running away in a panic, was Gardo who had voluntarily headed the attack on Vereda City.

…I'm impressed.

Gardo silently praised Luca who had managed to complete the tuning on the spirits in such a short time. That young child had taken care of it all from restoring them to even setting Gardo as their master, to the point where they were ready for battle. Although there were even stronger spirits excavated in those remains, it was easier to lose control the more power they had, and since there was not enough time to forge new Master-Servant Contracts for this battle, this was currently enough.

"—Damned Monster!"

In order to buy time for the civilians to escape, a group of people who looked like the guards for the city attempted a barrage of attacks. Many magic circles opened up on the ground – and countless lights flew towards Gardo and the spirits, but—

"……--Smash them." 【【【———————】】】

Reacting towards the order Gardo sent out, the spirits immediately reacted. They raised their right fists, and sent it flying towards the soldiers on the ground while the attacks bounced off them – in the next moment, a deafening shock resounded out. The ground was sputtered like a giant blast had happened, and a small sandstorm appeared. Immediately after – the spirits pulled back their fists and after the dust settled, what was revealed were the craters from the impact as well as the unidentifiable remains of soldiers from before. The civilians who had witnessed that—

" ! ! ! –Uuaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhh!!!!!!"

They severely panicked, and began desperately to try to escape.

When Gardo saw this—

"Wow… They really are amazing~"

A completely relaxed voice came from a nearby building where its roof has collapsed. When Gardo turned to look, a young high-class demon was there. That demon, was sent to supervise them, by the Council who had order Leohart utilize the spirits to invade Vereda.

"That spirits' degree of perfection seems really high. And so it would seem, that there would be a need for me to make a move at all, then."

"Of course… Right from the start, I had never considered about borrowing your strength."

"That's really impolite of you. Speaking of which, Gardo-dono – I had sent through a Ultimatum[2] not long ago telling them to hand over

Wilbert's daughter, and the nearby forces should probably be receiving news soon and would only be dispatching troops with caution – but however, why did you just simply let those civilians go just now?"

"…What do you mean, Nebula?"

The supervisor whose name was called out, then faced Gardo who asked him with a shallow smile and said:

"The ultimatum was sent using broadcast magic, so the civilians of the city would now know about her being here. The number of people who disliked Ramusas's methods isn't small, and if everyone were to find out that he concealed the big news of the sole daughter of the great previous Demon Lord – right now, the city is being attacked because of that girl. Thus, the people's' discontent towards him, would definitely begin to turn into anger."

That's why – Nebula continued:

"Right now we should be working harder – and murder these civilians. If that happens, the Moderates Faction would automatically crumble apart from within. This is such a great opportunity, so how can you just let it pass so simply?"

"……Listen closely, Nebula."

"Yes, what are your orders, Gardo-dono?"

Nebula replied impertinently with a smile towards Gardo who shouted at him with a low voice.

“The orders the Council had given you, should be to supervise the status of the battle with the spirits, so stop spouting nonsense. If you dare to do unneeded things – beware of yourself turning into meat scraps.”

“……..……..I understand. You are the most outstanding one amongst the candidates chosen to take after Wilbert, so I am not stupid enough to take you on as my enemy. Unless the situation becomes grave, I will basically stick to my orders to supervise and remain watching by the side-lines and learn from watching you.”

“……”

Gardo showed no reaction to Nebula giggling while shrugging his shoulders, and only said:

“Before they hand over Wilbert’s daughter to us, we will be splitting to take three routes. Ignore those civilians, Leohart doesn’t like needless killing. However – if anyone dares to get in our way, annihilate them.”

【【【———————】】】

Receiving Gardo’s orders, light appeared in the spirits’ eyes.

Facing forward while standing on a spirits' shoulder, Gardo said:

“Destroy your target, Vereda City – begin attack!”

Part 3

On the hill, Naruse Mio saw those giants begin moving together.

Despite splitting to take three routes, it was clearly obvious their target was Vereda City.

"Shit – this is bad!"

As Mio and the others realised the enemy's plan and wanted to return to the city as soon as possible—

"—Mio-sama! You're alright!"

Someone ran up the mountain out of breath – the maidservant Noel.

Stopping before Mio and after taking a deep breath in relief:

"…This is great. Does anyone of you have any injuries?"

"We're fine. Noel, what is going on right now?"

Noel answered seriously towards Mio who was still somewhat unclear:

"The Current Demon Lord Faction came. While we don't know where they got the information from… they said something like that you had inherited his majesty Wilbert's power and as it might trigger a new wave of fighting, they want to use this attack to prevent any possible future conflicts from happening."

In other words—

"If we want them to stop – we will have to hand you over to them."

"What, that completely outrageous… so that means that the Moderates Faction having power is dangerous, yet them having power is not?"

Kurumi said indignantly.

“Since from a long time ago, they have been searching for Mio-sama, wishing to gain his majesty’s power. In order to increase their control over the Demon Realm, they might do things that seem completely outrageous – that was what Lucia-sama had said.”

Hearing Noel’s explanation—

“—we understand the situation, but just what are those giants?”

Yuki asked with a heavy expression. Although they can speculate on their enemy’s intentions, but speculations will remain as speculations, the answer will only be known by the enemy; so what they should be doing right now, was to deal with the danger before them.

“Although we have been unable to confirm that – Klaus-sama had said that that probably are the spirits from the ancient times.”

“In other words, also enemies… Alright, watch me kill them a hundred times and grill them black.”

Mio then asked again with a [ah]:

“What about Basara and the rest, are they in the city?”

“Because of the emergency situation, we had asked them to go into the city to help – Basara-dono and Zest together as a group, and with Maria and Sheera-sama together as another group, they went to confront the enemy.”

Since this was a period of time where the Current Demon Lord Faction and the Moderates Faction were at war, they could attack each

other at any time. Hence, Mio and the others had already decided what action to take when something happened – if the civilians were to be involved in the battle, all of them are to help. Thus—

"Basara-dono had asked me to pass this message – Yuki-dono and Kurumi-dono, please obstruct the giants coming from the West side."

"I got it – Kurumi"

"---No problems here."

With that, the two of them moved without hesitation. When Yuki had started to ask Kurumi, Kurumi had already finished summoning flying magic – the two of them instantly flew through the air.

"W-Wait a moment – bring me along with you!"

However, Mio who had shouted towards the vanishing figures was blocked by Noel's arms.

"You can't. Mio-sama, you have to remain here, until the battle ends!"

"Let me go! …Why are you stopping me, is that Klaus-san's order?!"

Being glared at by Mio, Noel met het glare while looking directing into her eyes and said:

"That's right – however, Lucia-sama and Basara-dono also agreed with Klaus-sama."

"No way… Why?"

Mio asked, dumbfounded.

“If Mio-sama were to appear now, you would be doing exactly what the enemy what you to do. The most effective way to make the Current Demon Lord Faction to take responsibility for this assault, is to let their reason for attacking become untenable[3]!”

“But… for that, isn’t the Current Demon Lord Faction originally in the wrong for attacking?”

“I understand what you are trying to say, feelings cannot be applied to things like this – that is the nature of politics, Mio-sama. Not letting the enemy bring out their trump card while dealing another blow to them, this is politics.”

“But… if I were to just remain hiding here, I—“

“I understand how you feel! However, as Mio-sama was in Wilbert’s temple, she did not hear the enemy’s broadcast using magic telling of their reason for attacking and their demand for to hand you over to them, causing people to panic and grab the soldiers helping to guide them into the castle to seek refuge to ask just what is going on.”

Thus—

“If you were to show yourself now, the civilians’ anger might very well gather onto you alone; even if we manage to successfully repel this attack, Ramusas-sama and Klaus-sama might lose the people’s trust it might even lead to a rebellion. If you are unable to restrain yourself here, we will stop you at full force!”

“I—“

Hearing Noel's pained indictment, Mio couldn't help but stand there at a loss – and at this moment, the ground-shaking effects of an attack reached them.

"---!"

An attack then landed on the ground in the city at that moment, causing Noel to suddenly collapse and huddle up on the ground, and after that—

"Oh my god…"

Mio could only whisper that out having just saw *that*. The spirit walking through the Central Avenue made large craters with every step it made, trampling over the soldiers attempting to obstruct it. And as for the soldiers flying in the sky, only less than half the original number still remained. Soldiers with their bodies burst open, as well as soldiers flying like fireworks[4] were flying through the air everywhere in Vereda city – and after a spirit attacked with a kicked, everything in path were flattened.

Part 4

In the path of the kick, a group were huddled up together.

They were the soldiers for the City. They had tried attacking from its sides, as well as trying to draw near it by approaching on a path parallel to it, but they were in the end caught up in the crossfire by another attack team. And right now—

"…Guu….aaA, uuh…. Damn-- ……!"

Amongst the remains of the houses hit by the attack, someone was still breathing. That someone was Glen who was taught a lesson by Basara in that narrow alley behind the café.

Despite blood flowing out from various parts of his body like his head and his abdomen, Glen stood up and surveyed his surroundings.

In this neighbourhood, every single building have already become uninhabitable.

The other soldiers in the same team as him – other than Glen himself, no one managed to retain their lives.

"…One after another, just what the hell…"

The time where Glen had come to Vereda City, was after Wilbert's death – when the Moderates Faction was doing a large-scale recruitment. He had originally chosen to take refuge in the Current Demon Lord Faction whose power had begun to grow back then, but what had caused him to change his mind was that even if he managed to gain no prominent achievements in the Great War, we would definitely be able to gain a job in the government sector as part of the package to appease the public when they lose their troops after Wilbert's death.

And sure enough, Glen was enlisted to be one of the city's guards. However, as Glen had only chosen the Moderates Faction in order to get a free job, he held no feelings and relegations to his current job and to this city – at the very least, he used to think that way. However, with how dull life became with the days crawling by, he would begin to habitually visit certain shops to eat and drink, and enjoy his days

with the like-minded. In the last resort Glen had taken by choosing the Moderates Faction, he had knowingly managed to gain some things of his.

And right now – as of now, everything before Glen's eyes had disappeared. And the culprit, is the Current Demon Lord's giant spirit.

" ! -----"

Tightly gritting his teeth, Glen deployed the flying magic built into the back of his armour, locked both his eyes and began heading straight for the spirit who did the damage. On its shoulder, there appears to be the high-class demon manipulator. After destroying so many buildings and killing so many soldiers, they still continued onwards as if not bothered by it at all. Hence—

" ! …JUST WHAT THE HELL DO YOU EVEN THINK YOU ARE DOING!!!"

Glen screamed with his all, discharged attack magics towards the spirit. He shot electrical balls from his right hand, and while it travelled in a straight line while discharging some of its energy to its surroundings, it burst explosively on the forehead of the spirit.

"Haa….aahhh… Now know just how powerful I am right…..---?"

That attack just now was one that he had put his all in. Originally it was just to vent some of his hate and anger, but yet as if to mock him, the spirit continued onwards as if that attack just now was nothing more than a gust of wind. When Glen froze up from losing his train of

thought from that, the spirit sent its right fist flying backwards without even looking back, blowing away the roofs of the nearby still-standing buildings.

"------Ah."

By the time he had noticed the move, a large piece of debris was already right before his eyes.

Without even a moment to blink, just as the debris was about to smash in Glen awaiting his death – a magic circle suddenly opened up before him as if to protect him, and the debris broke up into dust upon hitting the magic circle and fell onto the ground. With the sudden change in situation, Glen couldn't process what had just happened—

"That isn't someone you can fight against – hurry up and fall back, leave this place to us."

A calm voice came from in front of him. When Glen looked up to take a look—

"…! Aren't you…?"

It was a woman that he was familiar with. There's no mistaking it, even if she isn't wearing a maid's uniform now, she is undoubtedly the one Glen remembered – Zest. However, her sight wasn't on him right now, but instead on something else. That something else, was a youth running towards the spirit with a large demonic sword in his hand.

"That person—"

Glen had seen that youth before, and he would definitely never forget the look of that person who had bitterly humiliated him before.

But – within his anger, what Glen felt was surprise.

He had jumped away at the moment the attack landed. Jumping around amidst the flying debris of the buildings – the youth who landed on the arm of the spirit quickly ran up to its shoulder towards the high-class demon, and swung his sword at him.

"……"

In response, the high-class demon raised his right hand and a wall appeared to defend against the attack, yet—

"OOOooooooooooooooooooooooo!!"

With an energetic roar, the youth brought down his sword with great speed and cut the wall into two, and continued approaching the high-class demon.

「——————」

With his defence cut down, the high-class demon was forced to retreat, and jumped backwards off the spirits' shoulder. The youth also jumped off the shoulder going after him in mid-air.

"Isn't that…"

The youth wasn't using flying magic at all. The flying debris from the destroyed buildings, had become a solid trail used by him to move.[5]

The cause of that was a magic from Zest who was in front of Glen.

“I will say it once more – hurry up and fall back.”

Zest left behind these words without even turning back to look at him, and flew towards the spirit – high-class demon vs the youth, and Zest vs spirit, with that, the battles began.

In a place Glen can never reach.

Gardo saw that youth, walk on a footpath created from the debris.

…Is that Zest’s handiwork?

Underneath him, a female demon began fighting with the spirit whose shoulder he was riding on until just now. Gardo had known that under the Council’s Zolgear, there was a trusted aide known as Zest. Although he had known she specializes at earth magic, he had never witnessed her battle. Being able to avoid its attacks while fighting the spirit while supporting each other, indeed only these two were left. Reportedly, Gardo had heard that she had sought refuge in the Moderates Faction after her master Zolgear died – but seeing her battle now, it appears that the death of her master doesn’t seems to be affecting her. After Gardo ordered the spirit to eliminate Zest—

【———————】

The spirits recognised Zest as its enemy, and thus began the real battle against her.

…And next,

Gardo returned his attention back to the human youth sprinting towards him. Before he reduced the distanced between them too much, Gardo expanded numerous magic circles around him – and in the next moment, countless fireballs were shot towards the youth.

「！――――」

The youth immediately reacted, gripping his sword in reverse, he swept out the footpath Zest had created. The fireballs then hit the debris indiscriminately, turning it into dust, and since the debris became an interference against the attack—

ZzzBoomboomboomboomboomboomboomboom!

Gardo's fireballs exploded upon hitting the debris – and thus causing a chain explosion. Immediately after that—

"…---Haaaaaaaaaaaaaahh!!"

The youth broke through the screen of explosions and continued towards him. Facing his cleave while he was twisting his body, Gardo engaged it while sending demonic power into his right shoulder.

In the next moment, just as the youth's demonic sword made contact with Gardo's shoulder—

Kake――――――――――――――――――――――！

With that sharp shock resounding from mid-air in Vereda City, the two of them confronted each other in mid-air.

"…Toujou Basara, right?"

Gardo's words caused Basara's expression to slightly tighten up.

“The report had said, Wilbert’s daughter was being protected by Jin·Toujou’s son.”

“……”

The youth gave no reply, but it was obviously acquiescence. [6]

From just now, he knew Basara is a speed type. Able to quickly ascertain the situation and then use the most streamlined method to evade or defend, and then retaliate with no lag at all—

…I see, his skill isn’t bad at all.

In Lars’s report, he had managed to fight with Zolgear for quite some time – but seeing his reaction speed, he would be able to put up a good fight against Zolgear even if they weren’t evenly matched. Since not much time had passed since his fight with Zolgear, it just shows just how much he had grown in this short period. However—

“…You’re too careless.”

Gardo said while looking at Basara in his eyes:

“Even if you are planning to hide Wilbert’s daughter, by standing out here so stupidly, you’re directly telling me that she’s right here in this city.”

“Is that so? Does me appearing here, really mean that Mio is definitely here in this place? Your words have no concrete proof, and they’re nothing more than speculation. I had heard that your reason for attacking was because that Mio was hiding here—“

The youth finally opened his mouth, and said with a shallow smile:

"—But could it be that just because Jin·Toujou's son is here, you guys had taken it as that Wilbert's daughter is also here, and thus attacked? If such a ridiculous reason was let known, you'll be the laughing stock of the big guns of the other forces." Hearing Basara's words, Gardo frankly replied:

"After I deal with you and your companions, and after I find her, you can have as much legitimacy of the reason of this attack as you want."

"Similarly – if you and those spirits are defeated, forget Mio, when even your presence is questionable, your reason for attacking will also crumble."

"--Do you really think you are able to do that?"

"That'll be difficult to say…"

Basara's expression suddenly became serious.

"If I have no other choice other than to defeat you here, I will do it – that is the reason I am here right now."

Basara said while gazing firmly at Gardo, his voice completely void of complacency in being able to defeat Gardo and filled with the determination to win no matter what. Hence—

"—alright, I will fight against you for a while, Toujou Basara."

Gardo said:

"However – if you really want to defeat me, shouldn't you call your other companions over? Although Zest is present to fight the spirit,

there are still two more of them, you know?" If you were slow, Vereda City might be flattened just like that you know?"

Basara replied with a short laugh:

"Thank you for your advice – but something like is obvious."

At that time, Gardo heard a sound from somewhere far away.

Turning to look, the spirit entering the city from the east had received an attack to the side of its head and thus lost balance.

He saw someone else in battle with an spirit apart from Basara and Zest.

The shadows of two persons moved around the spirit quickly – and after seeing the owners of the shadows, Gardo's eyes narrowed.

"That – that pair of succubus sisters?"

Part 5

In the path of the spirit at the east side, are Lucia and Maria.

"Although girls do like tall men, taking it a tad too far would instead have the opposite results, you know – you marionette♪"

To the grinning little sister who delivered a strong punch to the spirit's cheek and caused it to sway—

"Refrain from idle chatting in battle, Maria—"

Lucia who had also donned her battle wear said. She was standing on top of a streetlight, and the giant spirit was right in front of her.

“Also, you shouldn’t be hitting its cheek, but instead here.”

What Lucia then sent out, was the whip in her right hand. In that moment with the light and boom, the attack originating from below the spirit swept across its lower jaw. Receiving another attack on the opposite side of its face compared to Maria’s attack, the spirit struggled to maintain its balance.

“It is easy to rock the opponent’s head in this place. But to someone like you who is a melee fighter, how could you not know such basic knowledge…”

Lucia said while sighing:

“Furthermore, this is a defensive battle. Even if our primary objective is to defeat the enemy, you have to think through your actions to try to reduce the damage to the surroundings. Even if other people can’t do it, how can we not even try to protect our own home?”

After realizing Lucia’s intentions are to stop the spirits from destroying the city—

“Ah! I’m sorry, Lucia-oneesama. Then I’ll just—“

Maria hurriedly apologised, and ran towards the spirit on the wall. However—

【……】

The spirit saw through her plan, swung out its left arm to hit Maria.

「*Hoom!*」 The air resounded as the giant arm picked up speed aiming at Maria.

…Damn!

Lucia subconsciously wanted to lash out her whip to assist Maria, as there was no footing at all in mid-air for her – and thus her familiar little sister can't avoid that attack. But—

"—Oh!"

Maria leisurely twisted her body around, using inertia to hit her tail on the arm – and using it as a pivot, she pushed herself under the arm, and only air passing by hit her, leaving her safe and sound.

「———————」

As Lucia was shocked at Maria quick reaction, having been forced under the arm away from her original target of its lower jaw, Maria still haven't given up on her target and then grabbed onto the spirit's left collarbone and forcefully did a vertical flip upwards, jumping up and—

"Yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhh!"

Following up with a roar, she used her all to kick at its lower jaw from directly below, and then fell downwards—

"How was that, Onee-sama, was it good!?"

Tuning backwards to look, Lucia saw an expression she was very familiar with on Maria's face. No matter what, seeing her little sister all grown up after separating from her for a little while—

…She had gotten, a lot stronger.

It was probably the many battles she had been through together with Basara and Mio. Even though she had realised that fact from the reports she received, actually witnessing Maria's growth made her feel proud – as well as some melancholy. However—

"All that did was to change the direction it will fall, so it will still just destroy the buildings in the city!"

Lucia sighed at Maria searching for a reaction from her: [What a silly child]. After that she jumped from the lamp post and landed on the roof of a building, and then lashed out her whip once again. With another boom, the spirit who received another attack at the back of its head once again stood upright.

"Listen closely, Maria – against a gigantic enemy like this one, you have to knock it down while trying not to knock him over."

"Uhh, wouldn't that mean that we have to try to defeat it without defeating it, one-sama… [7] Is that really possible?"

"No, it isn't. In the past when I was studying the books the humans read, there were many suitable methods for taking down an enemy like this described."

If I remember it right—

"It something like after attacking its face on the right, attack its face on the left at the same time. In other words – if we attack it on both sides at the same time, there most likely shouldn't be any problems. If there's a right, there has to be a left; if there's an up, there has to be a

down; similarly, after attacking it from both sides, we just have to attack it on both side again."

"I-I see. But I don't think that it means what you think it means… [8] Speaking of which, coming up with a battle strategy like that just from that… as expected of onee-sama."

"That's of course. When I first read that line, I had first thought it meant that to get rid of a problem, you have to deal with it at its root. I had never expected for the Human's literature to describe such an effective method for dealing with gigantic enemies."

Lucia's recollected, and then returned her sights towards the spirit—

"Although splitting up to attack would be fine, but since it is us two – match up with me well, Maria."

"—Yes!"

Nodding, Maria gathered up her spirit and then began the attack on the spirit for real. Lucia's whips, with Maria's fist and kicks; the succubus sisters' matched attacks explosively enveloped the spirit's body. Within the heavy sounds of impact from Maria and sharp crackling sounds from Lucia's whip, the contrasting sounds seemed to be part of a play, interacting with each other lively – progressively turning into a symphony – Lucia's whip crackling being the riffs and Maria's punches and kicks being the melody.

【———————】

Maria and Lucia's combo gave no time at all for the spirit to defend itself, much less avoiding or returning attacks. But, seemingly as if

having just too much fun, Maria who lept from the spirit's shoulder to deliver a kick—

"Ahahahaha! – Another one!"

With the point of impact on its right cheek, an especially deep reverb resounded out. After eating such a great attack, the giant body of the spirit began falling over towards the left at a speed Lucia was unable to cancel it out with her whip. Hence—

"Mnn… This is bad."

Lucia immediately moved without turning an eye at Maria's performance, and shifted the target of her whip from the spirit to Maria. It's not to attack, but after wrapping the whip tightly around Maria's ankle after she had just sent out the spinning kick, in the next moment—

"Eh….HYYyyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa------!!"

Maria released a shrill scream. Lucia had then forcefully swung her right arm, swinging the whip which had wrapped around Maria's ankle, making the one who had momentarily forgot about her responsibilities take responsibility by slamming her into the spirit's left cheek.

With a sound effect where [Pam!] would be exaggerating, the spirit which had begun to fall regained its balance. Maria's body, was currently stuck on the spirit's cheek in a 「大」 shape.

"Uuuu…Lucia-oneesama, how could you do this to me…"

“You’re the one who went wild while co-operating with me, and I only returned the favour to you.”

It was just as Lucia was coldly staring while answering the complaining Maria, a new development occurred across the city.

【———————】

The spirit invading Vereda City from the west, went down on its knees after receiving an attack. And after that – a shadow descended at high speed towards the spirit.

“…They’ve made it.”

Lucia said while continuing to lash out her whip at the einher right before her eyes.

There’s no mistaking it – they are, that pair of sisters who have just rushed to the battlefield.

Nonaka Yuki, and Nonaka Kurumi, the pair of Hero sisters.

Part 6

The shockwave Nonaka Yuki had sent out from [Sakuya], had successfully stopped the giant spirit from continuing its advance.

But that was all that had done. The spirit would quickly stand up again and look towards them who were approaching from the air. This fact—

…Fuji’s protection really does not extend to here.

Caused Yuki to have a bitter expression. The spirit sword [Sakuya] was born from the rich energy at the mountain peak in the sacred forest, thus in the Human world, the closer it was to Mt. Fuji, it would be able to release more power closer to its original power – However, the attack Yuki had just sent out was far from standards.

Coming to this place that was in a different dimension from the Human Realm, had a really large effect on it. It was similar to the effect she had received within Zolgear's specially constructed space and barrier to hide himself – but comparing with that time, she was able to put out sufficient battle power back then.

…However,

Complaining wouldn't change anything, and Yuki had no intention to do that. Back in the Human Realm, the Demons Maria and Mio who inherited Wilbert's bloodline was also carrying the same burden.

--Since they were able to continue fighting to this day, it was now her turn to bring out her battle power. After all, the one who had decided to come to the Demon Realm was Yuki herself. It doesn't matter if it was for Basara, for Mio – or for herself, she can't become a burden to the rest. Thus—

"Kurumi – move as according to our original plan."

"But one… the [Sakuya] right now—"

Despite Kurumi saying so worriedly while using flying magic while holding onto her, Yuki still gently shook her head.

“No need to worry, I still have things that I need to do – you too probably should focus on what you should do.”

“……”

“—Kurumi.”

After Yuki said that tiredly in a reprimanding tone, Kurumi took an action – expanding a magic circle.

“I’m starting, onee…” “Nn – please do.”

Yuki nodded, and Kurumi activated the wind magic and sent out a mass of air, and its target – was the air around Yuki. Thus in the next moment—

「———————」

Nonaka Yuki, together with the air around her, was catapulted at high speed downwards towards the spirit. In the moment she passed by the giant spirit in the gust of wind, she swept [Sakuya] in a straight line downwards at its head, and a strong feedback was returned to her arm. Hence—

「———————！」

Yuki’s expression immediately turned grave. The feedback [Sakuya] returned was too strong, which meant that the blade was completely deflected and did not cut into its target. It had the power of Kurumi’s magic supporting it, and her current high speed had increased the force of the slash by a lot – but yet she was unable to slash into the spirit’s body.

Thus Yuki immediately jumped sideways away upon landing, and the ground she had landed on was covered by a large black shadow – [Booom!] and an explosive impact rang out. The spirit and stamped the ground with its left foot. Yuki who had forcefully managed to avoid the stamp—

"Kuu…!!"

Her posture suddenly collapsed. The spirit's stamp which had broken the ground also let out a strong air shockwave – and had impacted onto Yuki who was in mid-air.

【———————】

The spirit's attack with its left foot didn't just end there. With a small movement, it also swept out its right foot using the left foot as a pivot. The instep flew towards her at a speed surpassing her expectations, almost immediately. Yuki immediately used [Sakuya] to draw out a pentacle[9], and with it becoming a wall right before the attack hit her, she managed to preserve her life, but—

"Aaaaaaaa -----!!"

She was blown away like an artillery shell along with a shrill scream, together with the wall.

…This bad, with this speed……!!

While amidst turbulence, Nonaka Yuki's anxiety instantly rose. Despite being able to avoid being instantly pulverized by the spirit's feet attack, if she were to hit a stone wall at this speed, not even half of Nonaka Yuki's body would remain in a piece – an instant death.

…Please let it be on time!

Yuki desperately swung out [Sakuya], and expanded a magic circle behind her. Even if it wasn't enough, it's enough if this could be ended with just fractures or damage to her internal organs. However—

「！————？」

The impact from behind her had hit her much earlier than expected, causing Yuki's subconsciousness to think that she was dead, but it then changed quickly. What Yuki had hit wasn't a solid wall of a building--

"……Water?"

Despite being in water, Yuki spoke, confused. A mass of water containing oxygen which allowed a person to breathe within it had caught the flying Yuki as a cushion. The one who had used this magic to save her, was of course—

"Kurumi--…"

Yuki found Kurumi's figure on the top of a building not too far away. At her little sister looking at her with worried eyes—

"————Sorry, I became a burden."

Yuki apologised while biting her lip. The original plan – was to let Yuki who was unable to use [Sakuya]'s full power be the bait, and then for Kurumi who had received the black elementals from Lucia and had become able to use the Demon Realm's spirits to use magic to eliminate the spirit.

Additionally, this was Yuki's own suggestion, and she had begged Kurumi to agree to this battle plan; yet Yuki couldn't even become the bait properly, forcing Kurumi to cut off her attack magic just to save her.

Kurumi was different from Mio who utilized the demonic power within her body, she is an elemental master who activated magic by borrowing a spirit's power. It wasn't easy to ask for the spirits in the Demon realm for help, and now she had to start over again.

「……！」

Ignominious. Yuki felt indescribable frustration towards her helplessness, and left the water cushion Kurumi had put up. She once again looked towards the spirit that was a little distance away with water droplets dripping from her bangs, and putting strength into her grip onto [Sakuya] in her right hand – in the next moment, Nonaka Yuki dashed towards her target savagely.

"--Onee!"

Yuki took a glance at Kurumi who had cried out as if wailing.

Trust me – she told her with her eyes silently, *I will become the bait properly this time*. This wasn't just her trying to act brave, Yuki knew that she had the power to do that.

--As [Sakuya] was unable to receive the blessings of Fuji here in the Demon Realm, it's power had dropped considerably.

However – Yuki's body wouldn't become weak just because of that.

After reuniting with Basara, the power she had received from the Master-Servant Contract done with him; the power that she had accumulated all these while – will never betray Yuki.

Nothing will ever drop from the sky, and one will never reap without even sowing.

That's why, Yuki had resolutely come here, believing in herself and this power. To which—

【———————】

The spirit violently swung out its right fist, but there was still a big distance from Yuki. Despite the spirit's large size, its arm was still unable to reach her, but that movement still became a threat to Yuki. The fist had swept away all of the buildings in the path between it and Yuki – causing a wave of tsunami of large rocks. However—

「———————」

Facing the wave of mud and rocks, her reaction was fairly simple. However, it was an action Nonaka Yuki had done tens of thousands of times before.

She raised [Sakuya] up vertically, and swung it down along the same path – it was that simple.

From the neat handling of the blade, a gust of a blade of wind appeared and rushed ahead. When the blade of wind made contact with the wave of rocks and mud – and the wave split to the left and right with a [Fssh!], going past Yuki by her sides.

--It was a move that had not borrowed [Sakuya]'s power, but one that was from Yuki's polished skill as a technique-focused swordsman mainly relying on tactics and skills, a return to a display of the powers of her body only. Right now – a straight path had opened up before Nonaka Yuki's eyes.

Thus, she moved her body to attack. Pedalling the ground while keeping her body low, Yuki dashed forward with an explosive force, and shortened the distance between the two in the blink of an eye.

【……】

Seeing this, the spirit twisted the arm it had swung and slammed the fist into the ground; Yuki skipped to the left, and before the spirit's fist impacted the ground, she leapt upwards and twisted her body in mid-air. As the arm barely swept past Yuki, she slashed with [Sakuya] and cut through the wrist's tendon. Although the fist which had lost its gripping strength impacted the ground and swept up debris, the destructive power had dropped a lot – going along with the upwards airflow, Yuki once again soared upwards and sideswiped with the blade, doing damage to the spirit's elbow.

【———————】

The spirit released a scream from pain, but Yuki ignored that—

"—it's not over yet."

Leaving behind her comment in the empty air, she went past the side of the spirit to its back – and left behind two connecting slashes in the shape of 'X' while sprinting towards the other side of the body. That severed its Achilles tendon, and caused the giant spirit that lost the support of its legs to topple over backwards and land on its butt with a giant rumble.

With its right hand damaged and its Achilles tendon severed, the spirit then followed its instincts and began to stand itself upright with

its only undamaged left hand. Nonaka Yuki had anticipated this, and thus at the spirit's left hand – she swung [Sakuya] horizontally at the left wrist tendon, severing it in a single slash.

By the time Yuki had done that, she had bought more time than what was in the plan. And at the moment she successfully sealed its movements,

"—Onee, leave the rest to me."

With a calm voice, Kurumi said while appearing before the sitting paralyzed spirit. With the black elementals she received from Lucia set in the main slot of her gauntlet as the elemental master – green of the Heroes and blue of the Moderate Faction was emitted from before her palm -- a three-dimensional overlapping type magic circle.

【……】

As if the spirit's instincts felt danger, it opened its mouth widely aiming to bite Kurumi to death as a last-ditch attack. At that moment—

"--Don't even think about it."

Yuki immediately swung out [Sakuya], smashing it into the jaw of the spirit from the side. By intentionally not slashing with the blade, it is to intentionally create bludgeoned damage. The attack with calculated timing, placing and force, managed to perfectly just dislocate its jaw joints.

【——————】

Eyes widened from shock, the spirit now unable to guard could only just watch with its mouth open—

“Dance -- ”

At the same time Kurumi announced that, large amounts of pitch black flames poured into the spirit’s open mouth – and burned the spirit’s head to nothingness from within.

Part 7

The East route with Maria and Lucia, and the West route with Yuki and Kurumi.

As they were battling with the spirit on each route respectively,

Basara and Zest at the central route were in a difficult battle.

The reason for that, was that while the situation at the other routes were two people working together to fight the spirit, Basara and Zest had to separate to fight against the spirit as well as the high-class demon controlling the spirit.

--though the situation was difficult, thinking about it wouldn’t change anything.

According to Lucia who was paired with Maria, this place was too far away Vereda City from her master for him to rush here quickly; Yuki was unable to obtain protection from [Sakuya], and while Kurumi had received the black elementals from Lucia, she was still unaccustomed to using the spirits of the Demon Realm, so they shouldn’t even be

allowed to deal with a strong opponent like this now. Additionally, the spirits possess surprising regenerative power. So it still wouldn't take them long to heal completely even if they received an injury; taking into account the spirit's gigantic size and the inability to truss them up, him hoping for assistance from them would be for nothing.

And thus – with the situation not allowing for Mio to be on the battlefield, Basara has become the most suitable person to deal with this strong enemy. After moving the place of their battle field a building like a theatre with complex internal terrain—

"Ooooooooooooo!"

On the stone-paved floor, Basara began running towards the high-class demon.

「——————」

The high-class then had countless magic circles shoot out fireballs, to greet Basara's attack. As all of them are extremely hot and can combust, the distance he had to take when dodging had to be larger, which forced Basara to do larger side-steps to dodge the countless oncoming fireballs.

As for those that can't be dodged, those will be just simply cut apart with Brynhildr. However—

"Ku…!"

Clang! The sound along with the feedback transmitted through the hilt, caused Basara to frown. *Heavy* – those aren't just simply fireballs, it probably had some rocks or debris within them; with the option of

cutting through it no longer available, being able to deflect them would already be a very good thing. If one were to use a sword to deflect something like this for too much, it would just exhaust their hand quickly. Apart from when using [Banishing Shift], Basara would normally hold Brynhildr in a single-hand grip, but he had now been forced to grip Brynhildr with two hands for practically the whole battle, faced with this high-class demon. For large swords like Brynhildr, once the way of wielding them is changed, the wielder's movements will too also change. In regards to Basara finely adjusting his actions at his current speed, it's practically like suicide.

…Tch, it'll be great if I could use [Banishing Shift].

Even if it'll be unable to banish it whole, it'll at least be able to eliminate the blaze of the fireballs, or maybe even the rocks within it. But right now, despite Basara knowing that the situation is currently disadvantageous to him, he still does not use [Banishing Shift]. Of course, there was a reason behind it.

After defeating Zolgear, Takigawa had given Basara a piece of advice.

And that advice was that in the battles that would happen with the Current Demon Lord Faction hereafter, there is a need to avoid using that move. [Banishing Shift] is a move where once the target space is slashed, it can eliminate and banish everything beyond the zeroth dimension, and is very unique even amongst the multifarious magics and special abilities in existence. From another angle, its potential as a threat is much higher even when compared to Wilbert's power inherited by Mio. Just like in the past, Zolgear's target was just Mio

alone, he had also taken interest in [Banishing Shift] and had plotted to take it for himself.

Hence, if Basara were to just show that move carelessly, it might add to Mio's dangers. But in the first place, it was Basara who had voluntarily went and attracted the attention of the enemy. However, as long as it was to protect Mio and everyone else, Toujou Basara will definitely unhesitatingly use that power, even if it meant that he would have to foul his hands, use underhanded tactics, and doing dishonourable actions, basically if it meant even he had to become scum.

…But the problem right now is that—

Just like Zolgear had made use of Maria with a hostage when fixated on Mio – once the enemy knows that Basara has got such a unique ability, they might make a move to those around him.

That is something that Basara would not want to see. If he were to let Mio and the others be in dangerous situations just for him, even to the point of becoming a hostage – the moment he had thought about, Toujou Basara felt chills right from the bottom of his heart. Thus, no matter what, he had to not use [Banishing Shift].

Carefully passing through the troublesome fireballs released by the enemy, and making the enemy entering his range—

"---Haaa!"

Basara immediately slashed out with Brynhildr. The two-handed attack, with its power naturally much higher than usual – however

became useless. The enemy had not dodged, as the slash had hit its target.

It's just, the attack had not caused any injuries – the flesh of the high-class demon was too tough.

…Damn it!

No matter how many times Brynhildr hit him, there was only the sharp sounds from the impact. Forget about cutting into his flesh, it couldn't even make a scratch on his skin.

--The opponent's attack all consisted of fireball magic, so probably, he is a magic type.

The magic type basically specializes in using magical attacks, so they usually don't have a very tough body. But this person has got such a tough body. Probably just like Zolgear who was good in not only swordplay but also magic, this high-class demon does not just fights with purely magic, but also with his physical body too.

In the past –in the fight with Zolgear, Basara had been overwhelmed while fighting. Not only just Basara, Mio and Yuki too seemed to never have been a match for him. Thus after the battle, Basara and the others had set aside a large percentage of his after classes time and school break time to train, since after all, Zolgear isn't the only high-class demon within the Current Deom Lord Faction – of course, they had not forgotten about utilizing the Master-Servant Contract to raise their power by deepening their relationship, but just that alone was definitely not enough; for the future, raising their battle prowess is a must. In this period of time, when Sakazaki had taken action during

the Sports Festival, despite how Kurumi had become his hostage, Basara had inadvertently received a heavy injury; but right before that, in the skirmish with Tachibana that roused from a misunderstanding, Basara had quite effectively managed to suppress Tachibana who had Vampire blood.

That undoubtedly was a result thanks to the training. And after the Sports Festival – Basara had continued to train to this day and had undoubtedly raised his levels, but yet his sword now is almost useless. It's not that he was weak, but that his opponent is overwhelmingly strong, additionally—

…he is definitely above Zolgear…!

Although he had once been overwhelmed by Zolgear, as long as his fear was targeted, he could be damaged, and that thus was the way to defeat him; but the opponent before him right now isn't afraid of his attacks at all, so that was practically nothing Basara could do. Just then—

"…You really don't know when to retreat, do you?" "————！"

In the moment the high-class demon released a sigh, Basara reflexively jumped away towards the right, and a fireball then barely scrapped past his body, slightly burning his clothes. Probably because his compatibility with this opponent was bad, that he had given him the chance for a surprise attack. He had managed to get by this time with his luck, but continuing to be this close was extremely dangerous.

"—do you really think I will fall back so easily?!"

However, Basara continued to boldly remain in front of his opponent. If he were to draw distance from the enemy without doing damage to him, he will soon be driven into a corner and then eventually die. Hence, Basara cannot fall back, but instead he had to change his thinking on how to damage his opponent, and only a single answer came to mind.

That answer was to continue attacking, until he managed to do some damage – just like how Yuki managed to cut through Takigawa's barrier in the past. Basara lowered his body, and then launched another attack at a rapid speed.

"Haaaaaaahhhhhh!"

Brynhildr drew out countless curves lines of lights, continuously slashing at the body of the high-class demon. What sounded out, was the sounds of the strikes, but Basara continued to keep up the speed. The high-class demon that was receiving those attacks, then suddenly activated the magic, but—

「————！」

Basara jumped a short distance sideways, and while sliding slightly on the rood, he then once again launched attacks at the high-class demon. What Basara had just done, was to avoid the enemy's attack and counterattack. The result of careful and intricate footwork, which allowed him to avoid the enemy's attacks and quickly launch an attack.

Since the enemy could attack him with their all.

He would be fine as long as the attacks do not hit him.

And at that moment, as if the high-class demon realised Basara's intentions—

"—what a boring battle tactic."

Saying that with disdain, he brought out a new attack. No longer firing fireballs – but directly raising columns of fire by his legs.

As if like a wall of fire, surrounding the high-class demon.

"……!"

Basara hurriedly jumped backwards, keeping his guard raised while waiting for the volume of flames to decrease.

By using a magic like this, it appears the purpose of it was to force a distance between them.

Its aim wasn't to attack, but to defend – so once the flames weakened, he will immediately launch attacks. While Basara was waiting for a chance with such intentions—

"That is--…"

He quickly realised that he was going down in the wrong direction. The blazing columns were not getting weaker, but instead they repeatedly expanded in volume. Very quickly – the flames rising up into the sky, turned into the shape of 'a certain being'. That being was—

"A flame dragon…!"

As the flame dragon rapidly took shape before his eyes, shocking amounts of heat was still radiated to Basara who had taken quite some distance, even charring his fringe. Once the reins of such a monster that was made up of flames was let go, Vereda City would definitely be flattened.

「Damn it – do I really have no choice but to use that!? 」

As Basara readied Brynhildr to use Banishing Shift, in that moment—

『——————』

The flame dragon flew upwards with a screech, and then rapidly descended.

"Eh……?"

And swallowed up the high-class demon before his eyes, causing an extremely thick pillar of fire.

Suicide? –Basara began to have doubts in that moment, but the weird thing was that the theatre building had not caught fire as a result at all.

"—I do not wish to waste any more time playing around with you little kids."

A low voice came from above the swirling pillar – and after that, the body of the high-class demon appeared from within the flames. On his body, there was now a pair of wings and a tail, with two horns protruding on his head and his arms becoming very thick – his appearance as a whole was very red, and he looked like a fire demon god. [10]

That appearance...

Toujou Basara realised why the high-class demon looked had turned into that appearance. It wasn't that the flame dragon had swallowed him – but instead he had absorbed the flame dragon. The body high-class demon that had absorbed the flame dragon that could destroy the whole of Vereda City into his body before his eyes, radiated a scary amount of heat and feeling of oppression, and at the same time—

"I'm coming—"

Saying that short line – that huge bodt suddenly appeared before Basara's eyes just as his mind registered that message.

"Wha————?

What shocking speed. Despite his large body, his speed was much faster than the speed-type Basara. Facing such an opponent with such strength, even any minor doubts in the sub-consciousness would result in a fatal injury. *This is bad* – as Basara repented on his reaction, the high-class demo swung his right arm that seemed to almost combust the surrounding air at him, and he wasn't able to avoid completely it at all.

In the next moment, a large boom accompanied the impact of the attack.

--however, what the right fist of the high-class demon impacted wasn't Basara.

In the nick of time, at Basara's feet – from the stone making up the roof, a pillars suddenly rose up, pushing him upwards. Seeing the stone pillar being broken in his place below his feet—

"—Zest?"

Toujou Basara immediately realised who was the one that had just saved him, and called her name. Turning around to look, Zest was still in battle with the giant spirit not too far away, but—

『———————』

Their eyes met for a short moment. Zest was also currently in a difficult battle, but yet she still assisted him in the nick of time with magic. Thanking Zest in his heart. Just as Basara was about to jump away from the shattered pillar--

Basara suddenly gasped in shock. From the high-class demon's body part that had shattered the pillar, a flaming tentacle extended from it as its root, and it came flying towards Basara as if wanting to swallow him whole.

Basara hurriedly escaped backwards, and the stone pillar too was swallowed whole by the flames at the same time. After that, Toujou Basara who had just barely managed to escape into the air heard—

"—it's over."

The voice that came from directly behind him, told Basara that his movements had been seen through by the enemy, that he had been read right from the start – and without even the time to turn back to look, an unbelievable attack landed on Basara's back.

What Basara had felt, was not a heavy blow. Just like how the pillar that the high-class demon shattered burned, Basara who received a punch with extremely high temperatures, his whole body became bathed in flames--

“Ggaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhh——————!?”

Just like a meteorite, his body descended towards the ground while burning and screaming.

Hitting the roof within the blink of an eye, Basara impacted onto the ground of the theatre with a large boom. The impact destroyed a large number of the seats in the theatre, sending broken fragments flying everywhere.

「——————」

As Toujou Basara laid supine[11] on the ground of the theatre, he saw the high-class demon descending through the hole in the roof towards him.

And on his thick right arm – coiled the flame dragon he had seen just now.

Part 8

“…--Basara-sama!?”

Zest who had heard Basara’s screams, subconsciously turned to look towards the theatre.

And what she then saw, was her Master receiving the high-class demon's attack head-on, and his flaming body descending towards the ground.

「――――！」

Zest reflexively immediately activated earth magic. As she it was too late to do something like creating a stone pillar to disrupt the enemy's attack, something she had done not too long ago, she moved her consciousness into the theatre – changing the characteristics of the ground, and thus attempting to reduce Basara's impact on the ground as much as possible.

She had hoped that her hastily casted magic would make it in time – but as fate willed, Basara who received the attack was descending far too fast, and at that moment, the sound of Basara impacting the theatre's ground reached Zest who a distance away earlier than she would've liked.

"Ah…aa….! Basara-sama――――!"

Zest shouted, as if wailing, while flying towards Basara.

But she couldn't reach him. The giant spirit circled to in front of her, as if blocking her way on purpose.

--in the battle with the spirit up to now, she had never gotten the upper hand

She had to fight against an opponent who Yuki and Kurumi, as well as Maria and Lucia had managed to defeat with difficulty with two persons by herself so of course it would be much harder by herself,

the really knotty opponent is Basara's current opponent – Gardo. The one controlling the spirit, Gardo, as well as this spirit before her whose orders had been revised from [Eliminate any enemies, attack Vereda City] to be different from the other two, had been pestering Zest, keeping her busy here. But no matter how much difficult an opponent this spirit is -- her past struggles, are no longer there in her mind, and they are no longer important.

Because in her eyes now, Gardo had landed in the theatre after Basara/

Her most important Master – Basara, had befallen immediate danger.

"……Stop meddling…be gone…!"

With her head lowered, Zest said with a shaking voice.

【——————】

And the reaction of the spirit, was to silently swing its giant fist.

Next moment – the air shook as the gigantic mass of the spirit's fist impacted the earth, but—

【……】

The spirit slightly raised its head, as it realized that not only had its fist not broken the surface of the earth, Zest was not smashed into pieces too. The spirit's fist did not even touch Zest, and was stopped by a magic circle Zest had expanded.

And after that – Zest finally raised her head, her usually calm face filled with a certain passionate emotion.

And she roared.

“I said…… be gone————————!!” At the same time – the rubble around them instantaneously gathered together into a giant golem even larger than the spirit as if responding to her voice, its eyes emitting a certain light—— 《———————》

And brought its hands linked together as if praying, downwards. This move, brought the spirit’s head into its arms – and then smashed the spirit onto the ground. After paralyzing the spirit, Zest had the golem continuing pinning down the spirit on the ground—

“Basara-sama…!!”

And she then ran to Basara’s side, not able to wait any longer, this time with no more obstacles in her way – she had originally planned to create a hole in the theatre’s wall, but however—

“--I’ll be troubled, if too many obstacles appear.”

A sound suddenly came from her side, and at the same time—

“！——Gyaaaaaaaaaaa！”

Zest who immediately took defensive actions, suddenly took a surprise attack from behind.

The surprise attack which ruthlessly swallowed Zest whole, swept the whole street clean.

Part 9

「……」

Gardo silently descended into the theatre.

He had only a single aim – to clean up the enemy before his eyes.

--the demonic sword wasn't seen in Basara's hands while he laid on his back, most probably because he sustained an injury which did not allow him to preserve his weapon. Even then, Gardo will still not show mercy to his opponent.

However, this means that he would be destroying the future of a young person—

"…Please don't blame me."

After Gardo announced in a low voice to the person lying on the ground unable to get up – in order to reduce Basara's suffering, as well as to show respect to his opponent who dared to engage a life-or-death battle against him, Gardo raised his right hand with the flame dragon entwining around it.

--The strongest attack of Gardo, the one known as the leading candidate for the seat of the Demon lord.

Not only could it turn Basara into mincemeat, it carried enough power to burn away this theatre building as well as everything around it with ease.

…With this.

It should probably be enough to take care of Zest who was fighting nearby. With this, it'll probably be enough to make up for the spirit

fighting with Zest, as well as the other two spirits who were paralyzed by the enemy; although it'll be disrespectful to Luca who worked very hard and with difficulty, lifted the spirit's seals and forged the new Master-Servant Contract with the spirits, this would show that these spirits were only just at *that* level. There were even stronger spirits that were excavated from the ruins that were currently being studied, but they couldn't be sent into this battle due to time constraints; thus to not waste any more time with attempting to keep the spirits safe, why not just let Gardo himself completely wipe out all of the remaining enemies with more efficiency. Hence—

"—pass in peace, Son of God of War!"

With these words to send Basara off on the road of death, Gardo raised his right arm—

「———————」

And at that moment, Basara's right hand suddenly moved a little – by the time Gardo noticed it, Basara was already holding up his arm covered with armour, as well as that demonic sword which had newly appeared in that hand. *Just what had happened* – at the phenomenon that had happened right before his eyes but yet couldn't be registered by his mind, Gardo harboured a short-lived doubt as his right fist was on its path of being swung down.

--And in that moment, something belated[12] happened.

It was a harsh metallic sound. At the same time Gardo heard that sharp penetrating sound—

A white line cut through his right shoulder – severing the arm from its root.

…My hand…was severed?

There was no pain, and no sensation of being cut by a blade. Thus Gardo ignored his right arm that was flying through the air and began to analyse what had just happened to him.

Taking a closer look, Basara's demonic sword – the air around its blade seemed to be fluctuating.

No, it's not air. What was fluctuating, was the space around the demonic sword.

And as for that sharp harsh sound – after putting the two pieces together, what was the answer?

…Iai?

But lai is usually used when a sword is being drawn out of a sheath, which Basara's demonic sword didn't have; additionally – the usual lai will definitely not be able to sever his hand.

—then, just what was it that just happened?

The hint to the answer, was the fluctuations of the space around the demonic sword. The materialization of the weapon, was from something like an alternate space or a crack in the dimensions.

To put it bluntly – the demonic sword managed to reach supersonic speeds with lai amplifying the effects from the borders of the dimensions.

What severed Gardo's shoulder, was [Dimensional Slash], the ultimate in lai. Just then—

「——————」

In the short slight pause while Gardo was speculating on how the situation came to this.

As if grasping the moment, Basara instantaneously adjusted his body the demonic sword – and in the next moment, he was already in a stable horse stance.

This was a very large contrast from when he was lying down not too long ago, with this time him finishing the preparations for using lai properly.

What Basara was preparing to do this time, was to horizontally sever Gardo's body in the middle.

With eyes that was completely ice cold, he seemed like a completely different person right now.

However – Basara's ultimate lai was never put into action this time.

"Wha—…?"

The atmosphere suddenly shook and became volatile, and at the same time a flash of light surrounded the both of them.

In the next moment – the theatre that the both of them were in completely exploded.

Part 10

After the impact of bombing the theatre along with Basara and Gardo dissipated.

The beautiful streets around it too have already become rubble.

“Yare yare, it appears I overdid it a little…”

Someone said while smiling and looking down on this scene.

That person was Nebula, who had accompanied Gardo in the attack on Vereda City after receiving orders from the Council.

--right now, Nebula’s field of vision was very high and wide, but that was not because he was floating in the air.

He was on the shoulder of a giant spirit much bigger than those Gardo was controlling.

This was an even more powerful high-class spirit that Luca didn’t have enough time to deal with – but yet whose adjustments and contract were completed by the Council behind Leohart and the other’s backs. Nebula’s mission of supervising this attack on Vereda City was just merely a cover, and the Council had given him separate orders; amongst those, were to assassinate Gardo while he led the attack on Vereda City.

--lately, Leohart’s influence has been growing explosively.

While Leohart was the puppet the Council had put as the new Demon lord, him attracting the support of too many civilians and soldiers wasn’t a good thing. Although a puppet would of course attract more

attention the more gorgeous it was, it would be futile of the puppet wouldn't listen in the end. Hence the Council had organised for this attack, which would then be used to weaken Leohart's influential power. Deliberately not fighting a war decided by numbers and thus sending out the excavated spirits, was because the Council knew that Leohart would definitely send out a subordinate of his to lead on the frontlines. The number of subordinates Leohart could trust wasn't that big of a number – so by making him choose a commander in the sudden small chaos that would ensue, they could effectively reduce Leohart's power.

Hence, when the Council received the news that Gardo would be the frontline commander of the attack, they became very happy.

One of the reason Leohart was able to maintain as well as raise his positive influence, was because a powerful Demon Lord candidate had joined his faction, serving as the role of a prime minister. Thus—

"Once someone like you is gone – his majesty Leohart will probably be more obedient."

Before the eyes of Nebula who said that, was Gardo who had risen to about the same height as him.

"…Nebula, you bastard…!"

"Ah… So you really are angry~. Well, I guess it would be weird if you didn't get angry though…"

At Gardo's glare that was filled with anger, Nebula only said that while smiling.

The Gardo right now, no longer had the usual aura and pressure of oppression he had. The reason for that was because he had taken head-on the sneak attack of the spirit Nebula was controlling, and had become heavily injured – he had also lost his right arm that was the symbol of his power.

“But then again, the youngsters of these days still reap what they sow. Even if he is the son of Jin ·Toujou, he is still only a human youth, yet you still need to end his path… so while a bit uneasy, I had accidentally intervened. You couldn’t have already become soft from being content with doing the work his majesty Leohart has for you right, Gardo-dono?”

Hearing Nebula’s mocking—

“……I believe I’ve said it before.”

Gardo said:

“In the event where you do something unneeded – I will personally turn you into meat scraps.”

After saying that, Gardo’s body also disappeared.

“That’s right. But I believe I’ve also said it before—“

Nebula said towards Gardo who re-appeared beside him, as if not giving a damn at all:

“—unless things become grave.”

All of a sudden – Gardo who was about to dish out his attack suddenly disappeared, but that wasn’t what Gardo had planned. A

shockwave and boom followed soon after, as if testifying just how explosive that attack that just happened was. High-class demon's right fist that had just lashed out, had directly landed on the side of Gardo's body.

Gardo was blown away explosively, smashing through the remains of a large number of buildings in Vereda City – before finally coming to a stop after going through three streets. After the dust cloud caused by the attack settled—

"…Hmm, it is surprising that that was overkill."

Having dealt with Gardo, Nebula shrugged.

"Now then, let's move on to my next task… -- aya?"

Just then, he noticed the presence of other enemies.

Probably because he had dealt with Gardo, that caused the other spirits to not operating. Amongst the people dealing with the three spirits, other than Lucia who was Ramusas's aide and Zest, there were three more people heading towards this place. After seeing the fire within their eyes—

"…Ah, I almost forgot. I had also destroyed your companion."

Nebula continued while giggling:

"No problem – before I deal with my remaining targets, I shall play around with you guys first."

Part 11

Zest whose consciousness was floating around in darkness, felt something brushing past her face.

Originally she had assumed it to be wind, but—

…That's not right.

With her eyes still closed, Zest felt that there seemed to be a certain meaning behind the sensation of her face being caressed.

The sensation on her cheeks – seemed to be desperately urging her to awaken. Hence—

"…!……uuh…"

Opening her eyes just a crack caused sharp pain to suddenly course through her whole body, and moan in pain.

But despite that, she still fully opened both her eyes, and the first thing she managed to make out in her misty vision was the face of a lovely animal. Using its small tongue to lick at Zest's face was—

"You… are from that time…?"

Zest quickly realised that it was the unicorn pup she had met not too long ago in the alleyway behind the café, when Basara and the others visited the streets. Despite how Gardo had invaded Vereda City with the spirits and destroying many areas of the city, this pup appears to have been very lucky and managed to keep its life.

As Zest's consciousness thoughts righted itself—

"……Basara-sama————!"

She finally remembered just what she was going to do, as well as what happened afterwards, causing her to suddenly get up while calling out her beloved master's name. At the same time, there was someone else who heard it.

But the sign of reaction was not speech – but hollering instead.

"Aaaaaaaahhhhhhhhh—!"

"—Maria?"

Thinking something, Zest turned to look towards the sound, only to find the scene of Maria being kicked away by an spirit different from the previous three.

Her petite body impacted on the ground after being kicked like a rubber ball, and the shockwave blew away some of the rubble in the vicinity.

「……」

Seeing this, Zest was shocked. The power and agility of this spirit was incomparable to the spirits from before, and the one controlling this monster wasn't Gardo, but instead different high-class demon.

"That is—…"

Near the rubble Maria had landed, Zest found the figures of two more young girls lying on the ground in different positions – Yuki and Kurumi. They probably had fought against that spirit while she was still unconscious. The poor miserable condition of the large amounts of rubble in the vicinity, told her of just fierce the battle was.

「……！」

Despite how worried she was about their conditions, there is something tht Zest most do first.

And that was to search out her master Basara's whereabouts. As long as Basara is still alive, the contract won't disappear – thus while praying that Basara was safe, she closed her eyes and tried to sense his location. After that—

…There's a reaction… Are you alright, Basara-sama…!

Sensing a reaction from Basara caused her to immediately open her eyes and barely managed to stop herself from shouting out loud from the happiness. Basara is nearby, but his body wasn't visible, so he is probably now buried under the rubble. Although she very much wanted to go and rescue him now—

…It is best if I move cautiously.

If she were to let that high-class demon notice her, not only she would be in danger, as Basara too would be dragged into it. And not forgetting that more importantly, that spirit is not what she alone can win against. Thus Zest held her breath, and began moving slowly.

However – it appears that the high-class demon's eyes were just too sharp.

"—Oya, the mouse that I thought I've already disposed of is still alive?"

Before Zest could even begin to start moving, he already noticed that Zest had already regained consciousness.

The spirit then began to slowly turn towards her, slowly closing the distance between them.

『————』

Perhaps feeling the approach of impending danger, the unicorn pup jumped onto Zest's right shoulder as if seeking her help. Zest hugged that small body, at a loss of what to do. Since she has been noticed, it would be best if she were to leave the place immediately to bring the danger away from Basara and the others.

…however.

The moment she shows an opening, the opponent will definitely immediately attack. The problem now is the power and speed of the spirit that had exceeded expectations. Such strong attacks will definitely flatten the surrounding area, along with Basara and everyone else; but if she were to remain here any longer, Basara would still be in danger, so just what should she do – with wanting to protect her master, she was in a dilemma.

…! If this continues…!

In the end, she chose the way which has got the highest possibility of protecting her master, and put it into action. It was at that moment—

A dazzling suddenly appeared.

「————！？」

Zest thought the spirit had started its attack, and thus used earth magic to erect a barrier – but it appears that that was not the case.

The spirit's head was wrapped up in an explosion – it was the spirit that received an attack.

However, it seems that there was no damage at all. When the deep red flames dissipated, the head appeared, completely intact and covered in soot. Nonetheless, it seems that someone had saved Zest – as well as Basar, it was an undeniable truth.

…Just who…?

Zest began looking around. It was not Basara, not Maria, and not Yuki or Kurumi.

Lucia? No, she is Ramusas's aide, so she wouldn't come here.

--Then, just who was it?

The answer was brought into Zest's ears by the wind.

"…—there has got to be a limit to your arrogance."

The voice of the young girl who inherited the blood of the noble Demon Lord.

--She, landed in the space before Zest's eyes.

Zest too, only continued looking intently – at the girl who descended into the battlefield.

Naruse Mio.

「……」

Seeing the back of someone who originally definitely couldn't appear on this battlefield—

…She probably couldn't bear it anymore.

Zest wasn't particularly surprised, as the person in question was Mio.

That just now, was probably not to save Zest – or maybe while she had that intention, the reason she had come down to this place was definitely to protect Basara.

Just like Zest – no, Mio who had done the Master-Servant Contract with Basara long before Zest, should clearly know that Basara was nearby. She couldn't accept watching from the sides any longer, while seeing those precious to her and the town being destroyed just because of her presence.

That was why she had forcefully shaken off Noel, and rushed here. Just then—

"……Hou?"

The similarly completely uninjured high-class demon, deeply bowed towards Mio while on the spirit's shoulder.

"My my, if it's not the Moderates Faction's princess… I believe this is our first meeting. My name is Nebula, and I am a trusted aide of the chairman of the Council, Belphegor. Please forgive me for my lack of respect for speaking from such a high up place."

"…If I go with you, will you stop attacking the city?"

Hearing Mio say so calmly, Nebula smiled.

"I believe that we had sent an ultimatum, demanding for them to hand you over, but I had not expected for you to personally appear

yourself. In our attack this time, we had undeniably stolen the lives of a large amount of the Moderates Faction's soldiers and wrecked the heritage-rich Vereda City, causing many civilians to become homeless. All of that, are the price that they have to pay to protect you."

But however—

"Though I would be ashamed to ask, I really cannot understand why. Could you please explain to me to let me broaden my understanding – you impulsively appearing here and putting to waste all of their efforts and sacrifices, where did that foolishness come from?"

To Nebula's words that was equivalent to provocation—

"……Someone like you would never be able to understand."

Mio replied while tightly clenching her fist. The shaking in her voice – most likely come from fear, as well as strong anger and remorse. Although Zest couldn't see her expression from behind her, Mio's heart must be filled with frustration, while she glared at Nebula fiercely. After that—

"Hmm, I see – so this is the daughter that Wilbert had left behind."

Nebula smiled, but in the next moment – he said with ice-cold eyes:

"…— Kill"

At the same time, the spirit under Nebula's feet began to move. It lunged forward and appeared almost immediately before them, and sent out a punch as if boxing."

"Eh……?" "————！"

The unexpected sudden change caused Mio to freeze up, and Zest reflexively erected a stone wall in front of Mio and herself, but however she became just as surprised as Mio.

--Everything the Current Demon Lord Faction had done to Mio, was to gain Wilbert's power that Mio possessed.

If she was killed, that power will disappear along with Mio's life. Hence Zest had thought, even if they want to kill Mio, it would be after extracting Wilbert's power from her.

…Then why?

Despite her thoughts being thrown into confusion, Zest still forcefully maintained her focus. Although her wall might not be able to block the spirit's attack, their death would be set in stone if nothing is done. Hence she put in her all into that wall – and immediately after, a boom filled the air.

From behind Zest and Mio.

"Eh — …?"

Both Zest and Mio turned backwards to look confusedly. They saw the shockwave caused by the spirit's punch affecting the ground behind them, filling the air with dust.

However, although they understood what the scene before them was, they failed to understand what had just happened.

She was unable to accept that this was the truth. Because – Basara should be in around that area.

While still in a trance, Zest subconsciously used the locating ability of the Master-Servant Contract. Almost immediately, amidst the sandstorm before her eyes, she found a reaction belonging to her master.

「——————」

And after that, Zest's body began moving with even thinking. She swiftly spread her wings – and flew in a straight line towards where the reaction was from. With the obstruction of the flying dust everywhere, Zest could not see even Basara's silhouette, thus she used earth magic to – gather all of the flying dust together, settling all of it on the ground far away.

Finally able to see her own master now, Zest stretched out her hands, and plunged into his arms—

"……Basara-sama…?"

And said his name with a shaking voice and widened eyes, but she didn't receive a reply. That's of course, since Basara's injuries received from Gardo weren't light, and he had also received a surprise attack from the spirit Nebula was controlling – he was already in a state urgently needing treatment by that.

And adding on to that, Nebula has had the spirit send out another attack to exterminate.

Yet Basara was still alive, but he was only just not dead yet.

Basara is still not completely safe yet – he is not moving at all. Just then,

"…Aahh, I'm terribly sorry for the blunder I've made. I accidentally skewed my aim, and I had no idea that Jin·Toujou's son was there. I'm terribly sorry."

Nebula apologised sacaristically, and then—

"…Speaking of which, Princess, you still have not answered my previous question."

And smiled. And as if having seen throught all of it,

"In the end – just who did you hope to protect by shamelessly running out here and putting to waste the efforts of those around you?"

That was a line that was sufficient enough to annihilate Zest's reasoning ability many times.

I'll kill you! While hugging the unmoving Basara, Zest's emotions were about to explode.

--But in the end, she couldn't do it. Because before Zest began to move, or even open her mouth.

That happened.

"——————————"

A deep red wave of energy burst out with Mio as the epicentre.

Naruse Mio who was causing the space to shake uncontrollably and scream—

"……——How dare you…"

Towards the giant spirit and Nebula before her eyes, she said so shortly.

Within her heart, the surging and welling emotions were almost going to make her go crazy. The reason that made her surprised that had allowed to say such words coldly, was because within her mind, she was extremely calm.

No only just that – Mio right now, has not lost control of the energy within her body. The torrent of autologous erupting energy with her, was completely under her control.

--However, this was not something accomplished just by chance at this moment.

Being able to control her father Wilbert's power, as well as her own power – this was the fisrt task she had set for herself after defeating Zolgear. Because from right at the beginning to now, Mio had never provided any effective help in the battles they had.

Not long after knowing Basara, at the battle with Takigawa in the park[13] at night – although it was to not become a burden to Basara, in the end the result of going alone was that she was not even an opponent for him. She was even lost control of the power she had inherited from her father due to seeing Basara receive a major injury, and was in the end saved by him.

And in the battle with Yuki, Kurumi and the Heroes, she wasn't able to handle Takashi who wielded [Byakko], and he battle concluded with a conclusion where it seems that she was powerless.

During the battle against Zolgear, she had fallen into the hands of Zolgear, becoming a burden to Basara. Though she had won the battle and had subdued Zest, that was only possible because Yuki had helped. Right to today, Mio had never really gave any real contribution to her comardes.

Hence – to not become a burden to the others any more than she already was, Mio had aimed to be able to completely control her powers, and had succeeded in attaining that goal. Not only did it include her father Wilber's power, that strong power which had taken Zolgear's right hand was also now in her control.

…But.

Even if she succeeded, Mio never wanted to use that power. Other than the drawbacks of causing much physical strain on her body and sometimes even causing her to losing consciousness, more importantly, using that power was sort of like taboo in her heart.

--Naruse Mio had witnessed the murder of her adoptive parents without any warning, and had then learned that she was the daughter of the previous Demon Lord.

On that very day, Naruse Mio's past fifteen years of life was completely overturned.

Despite vowing to take revenge for her adoptive parents and living while learning to fight – behind the emotions known as vengeance, there was a fact that tortured her heart.

And that – was the fact that she was not a human.

The Demon Race. To a normal person, they were an existence that were called Monsters.

But before that day, Mio was completely living her life as a normal person.

It was just like how someone point at you and say: 'You are not a Human!', your own existence being nullified just so easily.

Though Basara, Yuki and Kurumi had abilities, they were Heroes, so they were undoubtedly Human; compared to them, Mio, basically, was completely different. But despite the differences, Mio was saw Maria as one of the Demon Race, did she ever see her as a monster and harbour hostility against her? The answer was never.

Despite that, when she was with Basara and the others, thought like she did not belong together with them would occasionally enter her mind, often making feel as if there was a gap between them that would never disappear, causing her much torment.

Of course, Basara and the others saw her and got along with her as a normal human, and Basara was the one who had accepted her right from the beginning. Though she was thrown out once, that was because Mio and Maria were deceiving Basara and Jin – it was

completely unrelated to her being the previous Demon Lord's daughter.

--Does Basara even understand, just how much his acceptance of Mio gave her heart salvation?

Therefore, no matter what, Mio does not wish to become a burden to Basara. It's just – using her father Wilbert's power that she inherited, would make her like she was not a human.

Mio is very afraid of experiencing the feeling of being of a different race from Basara. Hence with being unwilling to use her power, she and Yuki had received a sneak attack from an enemy. Naruse Mio wished to stay as a Human, and thus was not willing to use that strong power within her body – at least, until now.

--But, this is fine too.

Even if she were to use Wilbert's power many many times, Basara will definitely never change. Taking her in even after knowing about her true identity, and saw her and Maria – and even Zest as his precious family, his actions of putting his life on the line for them to this day had proven that point. She only just had to trust in her kind master who was willing to accept her – and be the one who loves him the most.

…And also,

Even if using this strong power will increase the distance between her and Basara, she can not allow the enemy before her to act as he pleases.

Hence Naruse Mio said:

"……You asked me, why did I come here?"

I'll tell you, then.

"Right now I am Toujou Basara's little sister, as well as his subordinate… Seeing my precious family and master wounded, is almost making me go mad."

Do you even understand?

"You had hurt Basara, had hurt my most precious person, and I will now make you pay the price – I'll kill you a hundred times."

That's right.

"Daughter of the previous Demon Lord or power… it's up to you on how you decide to see the situation, it's something unrelated to me, and I don't give a damn. I was originally was happy, with deciding to give this power which had snatched all that I had to you guys, but how regrettable… don't even think about it now. I have already decided, that I will never forgive you, who had hurt the one most precious to me, as well as those dogs behind your back."

And thus I advise you.

"—you better not underestimate Naruse Mio."

With that, Mio released the power within her body.

And in the next moment – with a boom, the enemy before her was crushed.

Part 12

Mio released Wilbert's gravity magic power, immediately crushing the spirit Nebula was controlling into pieces.

And after that—

"———————"

Perhaps this is my retribution. Mio lost consciousness as if being disconnected suddenly.

However – something caught Mio as she collapsed.

It was Zest's earth magic. The sand in the shape of a chair caught Mio, and gently lowered her onto the ground.

After that, Zest who landed beside her while holding onto Basara—

"……"

Silently watched the scene before her eyes. In just a single attack, Mio had completely minced that Spirit which was so powerful. Although she knew that Wilbert was hailed as the strongest Demon Lord in history—

…This display is too shocking.

And within Zest's knowledge, Mio had never once voluntarily used Wilbert's power; so if she trains from now on, forget about the drawback of fainting after usage, she might be able to use even more power than just now.

If used appropriately, this power would certainly be able to take over the Demon Realm, so it wasn't hard to understand why the Moderates Faction and the Current Demon Lord Fatcion urgently wanted this power. Right now – though the burst just now was enough to bring down Nebula, the Current Demon Lord Faction would've already detected it, which means that now they would not be able to cover up the fact that Mio is within Vereda City.

Soon, the war between the Curretn Demon Lord Faction and the Moderates Faction for supremacy in the Demon Realm, will start.

The number of causalities or sacrifices that will have to be made in the future, could very well be many times that of today. Yet—

"…Thank you."

Zest gave her gratitude to the unconscious Mio. Thanks to her, they had managed to tide over the danger from the enemy this time. To many people, making the war e more intense might very well be the worst thing in the world; but in Zest's heart, her master Basara being safe was the most important thing, and she will protect him with her life.

Hence, having avoided the worst case scenario, Zest let out a sigh in relief.

But at that moment, there was suddenly a burst of magic power.

" ! — This is…!"

Not know what was happening, the disconcerted Zest soon realised where the magic power ws coming from.

The answer was – in front of them.

The already-minced Spirit, was rapid expanding with a shocking magic power.

Part 13

The Spirit was already destroyed to the point where its self-healing ability could do nothing.

--But Nebula's body was unharmed.

Before Mio's gravity attack hit, he had already escaped far away backwards, thus successfully avoiding it.

"Destroying that high-class Spirit in a single attack… indeed, that is a formidable scary power."

Nebula said while on a building far away.

"So, as per Belphegor-sama's orders, I will now dispose now."

That's right – Nebula's actions against Mio was not him acting by himself. Right from the beginning, Nebula had received two orders; first is to assassinate Gardo in this attack, second is wipe out Wilbert's power along with Mio.

—Wilbert is the known as the strongest Demon Lord in history, so no matter whether his power falls into the hands of the Moderates Faction or Leohart, things would become troublesome . That powerful power, would easily bring about problems that aren't under the

Council's control – thus Belphegor gave Nebula the order to make sure to certainly end Mio's life.

"The Spirits sleeping in the ruins, were naturally to be ones used to defend a City, so… of course it would possess something for the worst case while defending the city -- a self-destruct function to drag down the enemy together with it."

So—

"Soul of the Demon Lord from the past age – disappear from the world together with your beloved city."

Saying that, Nebula then began casting the self-destruct magic, and the body of the Spirit far away let out a blinding light. A protective spherical barrier appeared, enclosing him so that he would not be dragged into the self-destruct explosion – an anti-field. Then, after completing the casting with the special code, Nebula smiled—

"—Goodbye."

And after giving his final farewell – the body of the high-class Spirit suddenly exploded.

A blinding explosion, that wiped out the whole of Vereda City.

--At least, that was what should've happened.

But in the moment the explosion and shockwave began to spread – it instantly disappeared.

"Wha—Impossible…!"

Witnessing the unbelievable scene, Nebula was heavily shocked.

—did the activation of the code fail? No, it did explode. After the successful detonation – the heat and shockwave created had suddenly disappeared, and there isn't a trace of the magic power left.

…W-What in the world just happened……?!

Nebula looked towards the location where the explosion was supposed to take place. Over there, he saw a young male standing in front of Mio and Zest, as if protecting them. He held a large demonic sword in his hands, in a posture where he just swung the sword – the Toujou Basara that should have stopped moving long ago.
Immediately after—

『———————』

Basara's ice-cold eyes caught the figure of Nebula far away, causing to involuntarily gasp and step backwards.

"Interesting… I'll have a great story to tell Belphegor-sama later."

But he smiled while raising his right hand, and a gigantic black shadow came over the sky. The opponent seemed to be hiding something, but as he cannot fail Belphegor's orders, Nebula himself has hidden a trump card up his sleeve.

Together with the booms that filled Vereda City, were the same type of Spirit as the one that exploded just earlier, furthermore, there were three of them; two of them landed behind Nebula, and one just beside Vereda City. To fulfil his orders at once, Nebula has decided to simultaneously attack them and Vereda City. Basara might be able to use a strange ability to cancel out the self-destruct explosions and

enter melee combat with the Spirits, and even if the Spirit beside Vereda City has to self-destruct as the last resort, the higher-ups of the Moderates Faction along with ramusas would be also wiped out.

“It’s truly a shame – with this, this is the end for all of you.”

Just as Nebula was about to order the Spirits to annihilate Vereda City—

Two sounds of impact[14] came from behind him.

“Wha—…?”

Nebula hurriedly turned around, and saw a scene even more unbelievable then just now.

Both of the gigantic Spirits behind him, were flying in the air – in a straight line towards the outside of Vereda City, and then the heavy sound of impact of them hitting the ground came from far away. Just as Nebula was at a loss as the shockwave of the impact reached him as he stood on the tower—

“Geez, can you not throw them into a place with many people? What if you crush someone?”

A shout lacking of any tension came from the ground. Looking downwards, there was someone of the same race as that young youth, someone whose name Nebula knew – that was of course, since it is impossible for him to not know the one called the God of War and strongest Hero feared by the Demon race.

“Jin·Toujou……!!”

Nebula recited the name of that man, filled with hate. His whereabouts were unknown ever since he had fought with Leohart, and not even the Council could track him – although he didn't know if it was by coincidence or planned out, he had come to this place to help his son out in this crisis.

…Then…!

Nebula disregarded Jin's prescence and began casting the magic for the Spirits' self-destruction; his target was not the two which Jin had sent flying, but the last one that was beside Vereda City.

Since Jin is now here, his chances of disposing of either Basara or Mio is now close to zero, so now he should at least attempt to get rid of the higher-ups in Vereda City like Ramusas. However – as Nebula was almost finished with the magic, a sound suddenly sounded out, and the remaining Spirit was crushed by an invisible power.

"—gravity magic!?"

Mio is still unconscious, so just who – his thought thrown into disarray, Nebula then saw a male with the Moderates Faction's proud mother-daughter succubus pair – Sheera and Lucia, standing on a rooftop. It would be weird for him to use the same magic as Wilbert, that male was someone like that – the current leader of the Moderates Faction, Wilbert's older brother.

"Ramusas…!"

Immediately after spittig out his name with resentment, his lips curved into a smile.

…Idiot.

Even if the Spirit became minced meat, he could still make it explode by completing his casting. Thus, Nebula continued to input the code—

"……?"

But suddenly, he sensed someone behind him, and thus turned around—

「———————」

Only to see a youth standing there. Hs cold eyes not only stopped Nebula's mind, it also froze his heart.

It was Toujou Basara.

"Eh——…?"

In the next moment, Nebula let out a funny sound.

His chest – was completely pierced through by Basara's large demonic sword.

Basara pulled out Brynhildr, and Nebula collapsed on the tower.

Large amounts of fresh blood poured from his chest, and his breathing became ragged, but despite that—

"I… don't want, to die…"

Nebula desperately squeezed out his voice, begging Basara for mercy.

“If you spit out who was the one that ordered this attack and his aims, I can ask the Moderates Faction to let you live… The Current Demon Lord Leohart should be after Mio’s power, but yet you attacked that demon called Gardo, and even tried to kill Mio—“

Speak.

“—who was the one that gave the order for this attack. Is it those guys from the Council or what?”

“ ! …T-That…”

“If you really don’t want to die, you better spit it out. From the amount of blood you’re losing, you only have very little time left – everything of you will be reduced to zero soon.”

Basara’s words caused Nebula to be silent for a while, and then—

“……Uu.”

Just as he was about to say something – a red marking appeared on his neck. That pattern that was very much like a circle, was one that Toujou basara was very much familiar with.

“That is…”

The curse of the Master-Servant Contract. Nebula planned to beg Basara for mercy by leaking information about his master, causing strong feelings of betrayal which activated the curse. According to what Takigawa said, the Master-ervant Contract had the effect of not allowing the leakage of secrets when a subordinate is captured by the

enemy, and the subordinate will die when the curse activates at its strongest effect.

Basara's circumstances were special – his Contract with Mio and Yuki were done with using Maria's magic, and Zest's were done with using Sheera's magic, so the effect of the curse were all aphrodisiac effects.

So, what was the effect of the Master-Servant Contract of Nebula – the answer was very soon shown before Basara's eyes.

"Uh——…?"

After letting out a short groan, Nebula's body exploded from the inside with a muffled 'Pop'.

Basara had hurriedly retreated, afraid that he was doing an explosion by self-destructing. Fragments that used to be Nebula landed by Basara's feet, dying the rooftop into a pool of red. After that—

"Basara-sama, are you fine?!" "Aah, I'm fine."

Nodding slightly to answer Zest hurriedly flying towards him—

"……"

Toujou Basara, forthrightly, gazed upon the tragic ending that may come to someone that have done a Master-Servant Contract. In the worst case scenario – Mio, Yuki, and Zest might probably lose their lives in a similar fashion. The new realisations weighed heavily on Basara's heart – the Master-Servant Contract he had done with them used their lives as a wager. It was not something to be joked about. Just then—

“Basara-sama…”

Zest softly leaned onto Basara’s back, and spoke no more.

Snuggling against Basara’s back just like that. That, is Zest’s answer to her master Basara. Thus, Basara turned around and tightly gripped Zest’s waist, and said:

“Let’s go… We need to quickly return back to the city and help treat the wounded.”

After that, the two of them left the rooftop.

Behind them, were the remains of Nebula and Vereda City devastated with debris everywhere -- the peaceful days that was there until yesterday is now gone.

In that place, only the scars known as the cruel reality of War remained.

Translator Notes and References

1. Jump up↑ kanji is 英霊 (eirei)
2. Jump up↑ a final demand or statement of terms, the rejection of which will result in retaliation or a breakdown of relations
3. Jump up↑ (especially of a position or view) not be able to be maintained or defended against attack or objection
4. Jump up↑ literally on fire
5. Jump up↑ like a improvised road
6. Jump up↑ the reluctant acceptance of something without protest
7. Jump up↑ The joke is that you have to do something to it while not doing that same something to it, with the something being a word/phrase with multiple sublimed meanings
8. Jump up↑ a common trope not only in anime? Don't really want to search it up right now, so do it yourself
9. Jump up↑ or pentagram, I'm not sure
10. Jump up↑ 魔神majin
11. Jump up↑ (of a person) lying face upwards
12. Jump up↑ coming or happening later than should have been the case
13. Jump up↑ 都立公园 in real life, formally known as Tokyo Metropolitan Park

14. Jump up↑ Boom!

Epilogue - Last of Reunions and Death Matches

Part 1

When they had returned to Vereda city, what came first was the treatment of the girl's wounds.

Maria, Yuki, and Mio were all heavily injured when going against Nebula's high class spirit, and they had used up a lot of strength. The physician had also said they need a lot of rest -- although the unconscious Mio had no outer injuries, using Wilbert's power had made her demonic power and vigour weak. And when the diagnostic results said that they only needed rest and that they were not in any life-threatening danger, a large weight was finally lifted from Basara's heart.

After that, Zest and Basara went to another room to receive treatment. When it came to an end--

"—Zest, I'll be leaving them under your care."

"Yes, Basara-sama… But, your injuries aren't light at all, please try to return as soon as possible, and don't force yourself."

"Alright, I understand… Once I'm done, I'll return immediately."

His condition was just as Zest feared, receiving a high class spirits' surprise attack from Gardo had given him heavy injuries, and the doctors have advised him to get convalesce [1]. To be honest, he was

very tired right now, and he very much would like to just lie down now and sleep.

--But before that happens, he must speak with a certain someone first.

It wasn't Ramusas or Claus -- Mio has already decided to cut communications with Ramusas; also, another reason for not wanting to contact them was that right now Lucia, him, and the rest of the high class demons of the Moderate faction were discussing future plans. Since the city was also attacked, it has affected the livelihood of the refugees, and temporary accommodation must be procured for them now.

…And also.

After the battle, the moderate faction captured a high class demon from the enemy side. Nebula had died from the explosion of the master-servant contract curse, while Gardo had an arm severed by Basara and was sent flying together with Basara from the surprise attack from the spirit, but his injuries weren't fatal. As this incident may officially spark a war between both sides, Gardo is quite the bargaining chip. As to his disposal, it must be carefully considered.

As to what are the important matters now, Basara had no clue about it. Ramusas as the leader of the moderate faction, must undoubtedly have a lot of work waiting for him.

…Just let him be. I do want Mio and Yuki to rest for now after all.

Once their issues are properly handled, our strength would've probably almost recovered by then.

Then again, there would probably be no harm in talking with them again.

Basara cut across the Vereda that is currently in a mess from the fighting, and came to the courtyard. Here, the maids, ministers, and soldiers were either treating wounded soldiers or seeing to the reseltment of the refugees, and so they were very busy. But--

『――――――――』

The gazes of the people who are very busy would occasionally go onto a particular person. That person was leaning his back on the city wall, with a cigarette in his mouth, leisurely relaxing while watching the hustle and bustle. That person was – Toujou Jin.

…They can't be blamed…

After all, from the previous war, he was known as the [God of War], the strongest hero. Even for the Moderate Faction, asking the demons to not pay any attention to Jin was something very difficult.

Basara went towards Jin, and when he noticed him nearing him--

"…Hai, Basara. How have you been recently?"

He slightly chuckled while posing this question to him, and Basara couldn't help but to smile bitterly. Even though they finally reunited in the Demon Realm, his manner of speech still hadn't changed.

"I'm doing fine. I've managed to tide over it after all… And it was very thrilling."

He shrugged while replying:

“The head of the household once told me: when the father isn’t present, the duty of protecting the family falls onto the eldest son.”

“…I see.”

Basara immediately continued, as if cold water had been poured on him from Jin’s reply.

“What […I see] …Isn’t that just...too short? You have not seen your son in a long time, and after filling in for you, don’t you have anything else other than that to say to your son?”

After Jin left the Toujou Residence, Basara’s days as the adult head had always been on the edge.

At first, it was protect Mio and Maria as a family. After that, both Yuki and Kurumi joined in, and to protect thems, he had fought for his and their lives until today. Hearing Basara say so--

“You are my son that I am proud of after all… Haven’t I said before that everything would be fine?”

He then lightly patted Basara’s head.

“Take a look… I wasn’t wrong, was I?”

Seeing his father’s smile, he felt happiness in managing to live up to his father’s expectations, and--

….Um, what am I so flighty about?

Feeling a sudden burst of shyness,he pushed Jin’s hand away.

Because he then suddenly remembered what he was complaining about just now.

Normally, he had the viewpoint of a brother and a master. And as their brother and master, Mio and the rest had often tried to spoil him, he had never done the same to them. Additionally, in Basara's heart, Jin was the one he respected the most, and even from the perspective of a person or a man, he could never hope to match him.

-- From the beginning to now, no matter how difficult the situation he was in, he had never even once thought [if only Jin was here]… Of course, Jin's phone had a special magical chip installed, so he could contact him whenever he wanted. Everytime he survived a life or death situation or a difficult situation, he would always report it to Jin.

But honestly speaking, for the events involving Takigawa, Takashi and the rest being sent by the [Village], and Zolgear, if Jin was present back then, the situation would've been resolved with the least amount of damage.

The hopes of being acknowledged and praised by his father was already lodged in his heart from long ago. It's just--

….Just how old do I think I am…

He slightly blushed. It was good that he had come alone… If his current state was seen by Mio and the rest, Maria would've definitely taken advantage of the situation to embarrass him.

"Ah… That's right, dad. What did you come here for?"

He tried to do away with the awkwardness, and changed the topic.

“You had said that you had come to the demon realm to make contact with a certain someone, right? If I remember correctly, you had arranged the meeting place to meet him already… So, did you find the one you were looking for?”

At this point, he slightly shifted his line of sight--

“The one you come to look for, couldn’t possibly be him, right…?”

A demon was standing a certain distance from them, and it wasn’t clear what he was supposed to be doing here. That demon was by Jin’s side when he had come to save Basara from the danger.

“Eh? Oh, no, that’s not him. I had taken a little detour on my way here. Some stuff happened, and since we were chummy with each other, I had brought him along with me. Isn’t that right, Fio?”

“……..Did that even happen?”

The teen called Fio replied with a dirty look to the smiling Jin.

“…..You met up with him on your way here…?”

“Don’t think too much into it, he’s only just being playful.”

Towards Basara who was rolling his eyes, Jin said to him without changing his mood:

“Fio, we humans have a saying -- at home, you rely on your parents. Away from home, you rely on your friends.”

“What does that have to do with me!? You were the one who had insisted on making me your friend!”

Fio had shouted that while holding his head, and continued:

“Ah ha, my goodness… I had better make my way to the lord’s capital immediately… It’s all your fault for dragging me everywhere, and even dragging me into the palace of the moderate faction camp. Going AWOL isn't something trivial at all, and right now I can’t remember how long I had been gone. Just how are you going to reimburse me!?”

“……..Dad, do remember that kidnapping a teen is a crime…”

“Weird… I do remember getting his consent for this…”

"That better be the case… It looks like that he is about to break down anytime. Uh, putting that aside, he had said the lord’s capital--"

Without finishing his sentence…

The city suddenly shook, with a [Boom!] accompanying it.

“Eh…!” “Did the enemy attack again…?” “Everyone stay calm! Prepare your weapo—“

As if feeling shock and fear still remaining from facing the spirits, panic instantly spread quickly.

“—Oi, I have a question for you.”

Just then, Jin said that towards a soldier who seemed to have the rank of a captain.

“Right now most of the higher ups are in a meeting, and aren’t the soldiers in the city now busy with the aftermath? Shouldn’t protecting the prisoners have the lowest priority now?”

“T-That--…”

The soldiers seemed to be able to find any words for this…

“! -----“

And Basara also began sprinting at almost the same moment.

Part 2

The captured Gardo is a high class demon.

He wasn’t only a good bargaining chip in negotiations, the chances of him knowing the current situation of the current demon lord faction are high. If any useful information could be extracted, not only could they reduce losses of the soldiers in the Current Demon Lord Faction’s offensive, they might even get the key to defeating the powerful enemy.

And so because of that, Toujou Basara had ran through the mess, entering the chaotic atrium.

He continued down the stairs, towards the city’s lowest level.

The dungeon.

Arriving at the bottom of the stairs and passing through the stone tunnel, he then saw it.

The guards guarding the prisoners were lying on the floor motionlessly. Behind them, the door leading to the lowest level of the dungeon has been destroyed. The door was protected by a powerful magical seal, capable of suppressing a high class demon within a confined space. Gardo was originally supposed to be behind the door, but--

"That is--…"

Within the room beyond the door, there was a man standing beside Gardo.

Though his back was facing Basara, making him difficult to recognise, Basara could immediately tell who that person was. Although the clothing was a little different from usual, his aura hadn't changed at all.

And so, he called out his name.

"------Takigawa!"

Towards Basara's shout, Takigawa didn't turn back towards him, instead--

"I'm sorry. I'll be bringing this person back. The number of subordinates that Leohart can trust is very small, so if I leave this person here behind, his close buddy would most likely bring an entire army to attack just to rescue this person."

After saying that, Takigawa then silent raised his right hand – to create a giant black sphere.

Basara knew that it was to aid in Gardo's escape, so--

“! …….—Don’t run!”

He immediately materialised Brynhildr and rushed into the room to attack. However--

Clang----------!

“Huh…?”

Brynhildr rebounded, as if it had hit a solid surface that it cannot cut, and the force caused Basara to jump back. Without even turning his head to him, Takigawa had managed to repel his attack.

…Just how…?

Although Takigawa had repelled his attacks quite a number of times when they fought in the past, the master-servant contract he had made with both Mio and Yuki had already raised his battle potential quite a number of time already. Additionally, the same thing also happened with Zest. With that, he had thought that the difference between his power and Takigawa’s wasn’t that big already. So why was his attack repelled easily just now? In the moment where Basara was stunned, Takigawa’s large black sphere suddenly swallowed Gardo’s body, making him disappear.

And only then, did Takigawa turn back to look at him.

Not only his clothing, his hairstyle was also different from usual.

“Oh please, Basacchii… Why are you that surprised?”

He then put on his more familiar bitter smile, and said:

“This place is within the demon realm… My demonic power now will of course be more powerful than the times when I had fought you in the Human realm, isn’t that a given?”

“!.....”

Basara’s face then visibly tightened. The demon realm was chock full of demonic concentraion, so the current the situation is in Takigawa’s favour. But still--

……..To think that just a change in the location would bring about such a big change.

The pressure released by Takigawa now, didn’t lose to that of Zolgear’s or Gardo’s. Basara suddenly realised, Takigawa Yahiro, who had accepted the mission of monitoring Mio who had Wilbert’s power after Zolgear; his power is really a force to be reckoned with.

And also, it’s likely that when he had fought with Basara in the past, he wasn't serious at all and was only playing around with him.

“Takigawa… Could it be that you’re not part of the Moderate Faction?”

“Well, what do you think? ….I am not a very decisive and clear-cut person.”

He said so carefreely, towards Basara who didn’t dare to act rashly.

“Speaking of which, Basacchii…. Even after advising you so many times, you’re still using that eliminating ability of yours. What are you going to do now? Nebula’s sight is linked with his master’s, and now

those old guys who has had their sight's linked with him know of your ability…"

"If I hadn't used it back then, we would've also been eliminated together with Vereda in that explosion. It's better the way it is now, I would say. Let me ask you--"

He suddenly lowered his voice and continued:

"The ones giving orders behind the curtains to Nebula are the high class demons from the Council, right? ...It seems like they have lost hope in obtaining Wilbert's power, and are instead trying to kill Mio instead…"

"That right… They believe that letting Leohart obtain that power would make his battle potential and appeal to the masses so strong that they can't control him. Whether if it was to let Leohart continue to be their puppet, or to not let the moderate rely on Wilbert's power by creating disturbances, they seem to see eliminating Mio as the most effective way. What are you going to do now?"

To Takigawa who was smiling, Basara replied:

"Mio has already laid the foundations for going against the Moderate Faction, and we support her decision. Since the ones who want her dead are actually the Council, we can't run forever, can we?"

Declaring his intention to kill--

"…..Is that so?"

He only laughed. Just then, the reinforcement soldiers arrived at the scene, much later than he expected.

Takigawa's line of sight immediately deviated from Basara, towards a maid – Noel.

"---Lars!"

When their eyes met, Noel became stunned. It was most likely that Noel was thinking that the intruder couldn't possibly be Takigawa.

"W-Why… Why would Lars…?"

He remained silent towards everyone present.

What he instead did do, was to suddenly disappear into the void.

"! –Takigawa!" "Lars!"

They shouted out at the same time, but were instead too late. Just then--

『……Let's end everything here.』

Takigawa's voice sounded out from an unknown place.

『Think about your current position, and come to our Lord's capital. Bring as many soldiers as you want. As to where the location would be, the higher-ups of the Moderates Faction and your dad knows of it. The ones behind this attack, and the the Council who had also made attempts at Mio's life, is over there. Those old ones, who can be said to be the ones dominating over the Demon Realm until now, and will also do so for the future. Basacchii, do show me how long you can last before them… Okay?』

And after that, left his last line.

As to the main purpose of his trip this time, it might be to just say these words.

There's the the Council, and other than that, the one who just said those words to him was an enemy who he must cut all ties with.

Since the demon realm can't have two Demon Lords, war is inevitable.

That is their destiny.

『The current demon lord -- Leohart, is expecting you.』

Translator Notes and References

1. Jump up↑ time spent recovering from an illness or medical treatment; recuperation.

さあ
刃更さん、
どうぞこちらへ。
お楽しみの
時間です♥
体育際の打ち上げで、橘七緒や梶浦立華と。
そして、その後は養護教諭の長谷川千里と。
他にも競泳水着に着替えた澪や柚希、
方理亜によって刃更好みに変えられてゆく胡桃とも。
本編の裏側で、刃更が送っていたヒロイン達との甘い一時とは――…
新妹魔王の契約者 VI
The Testament of Sister New Devil
テスタメント
COMING SOON!

ネコっ娘
コミカライズでも
そろそろゲストが
活躍
2014.3

緻密に計算されたシナリオ、迫力ある戦闘シーン、
そして何より興奮を誘うエロ展開！
そんな一粒で何度もおいしい物語もいよいよ５巻目
に突入ですね～　おめでとうございます！

ご縁があって「ヤングアニマル嵐」にて
スピンオフコミカライズを担当させていただくことに
なりまして、毎回毎回澪たちにどんなエロいことを
して差し上げようかと楽しみながら
描かせていただいております（^ω^）

上栖先生にはどんどん攻めていただきたい！
そしてボクたちをどんどこ漲らせてください！！

木曽フミヒロ

あとがき

新妹魔王 5巻 お買い上げ

ありがとうございます！

刀更家にもうひとりゼストちゃんウェイトレスをする!!話どう

住まわせてなったが主人のために
のバイト
って
ですかね？